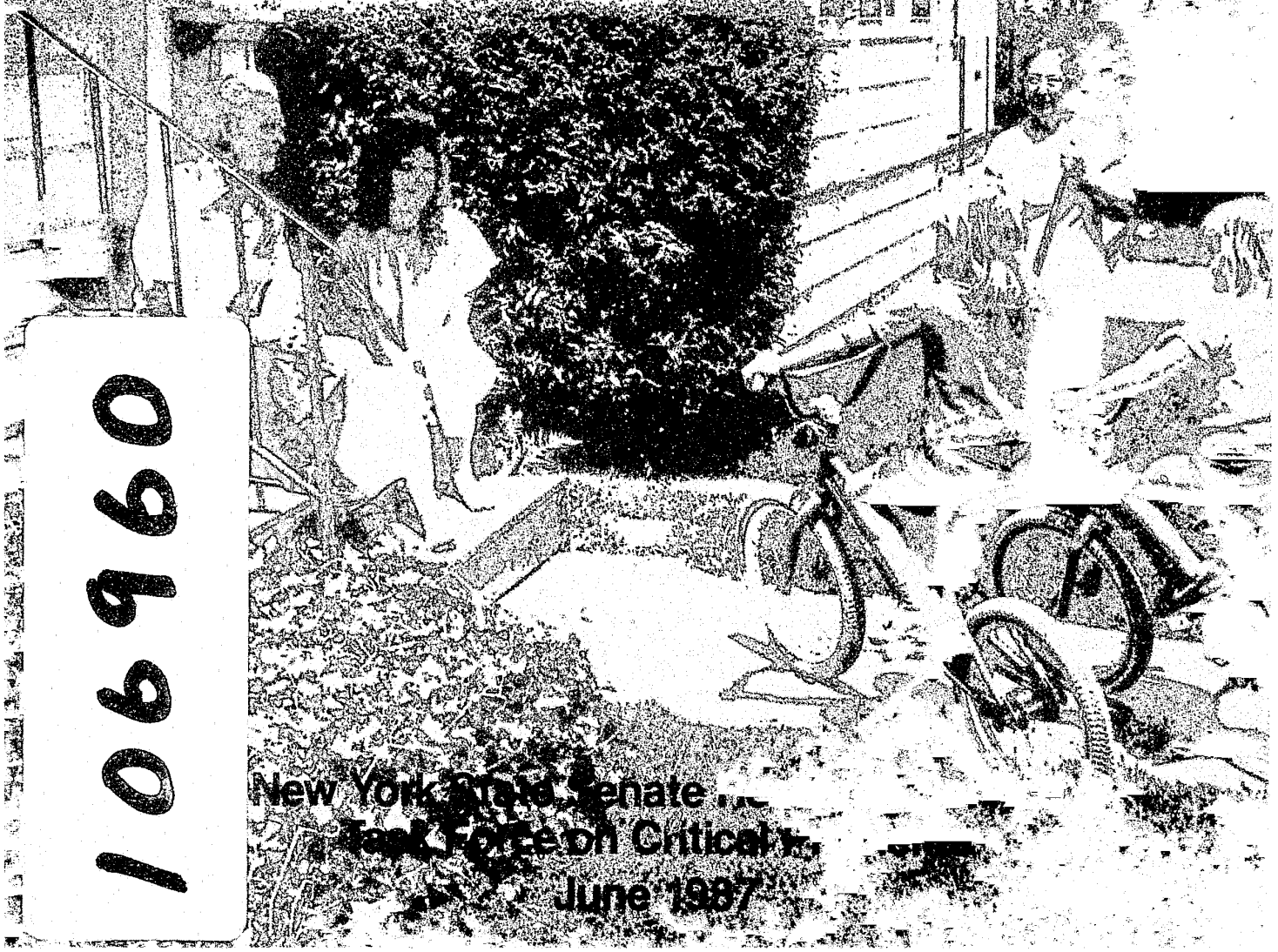
BORS, NOT VICTIMS

A Response to Crime Against Seniors



New York State Senate
Task Force on Critical Issues

June 1987

106960

NEIGHBORS, NOT VICTIMS

A Response to Crime Against Seniors

A Report by the
New York State Senate Research Service
Task Force on Critical Problems

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June 1987

The cover was designed and rendered by Ellen Clark and the Senate Graphic Arts office. Cover photography was by Paul Costin and Susan Peterson of the Senate Audio-Visual office, with assistance from Edward Hinkleman, Rose Bertrand, Stephanie Gould, Devon Russell and Emily Russell.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people in government, academia, business and community organizations provided information, observations and materials that the Task Force used in preparing this report. We are particularly grateful to:

the staff of the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services' Office of Crime Prevention:

Susan Jacobsen, Director
William Longworth, Assistant Director
Victoria De Rosia
Thomas Dovolos
Michael Passaro
Andrew Placito, Jr.
Elizabeth Tedesco
Stephen Therriault

and William Koester, NYS Office for the Aging.

We are grateful also to:

Glynis Ault, North East Block Club Alliance
Ruth Bennett, New York Psychiatric Hospital
Vernon Blue, Lackawanna Community Safety and Security Program
Dawn Borgeest, United Way of Greater Rochester
James Bubb, Pennsylvania Department of Aging
Margaret Chretien, NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services
Marcia Dwyer, Whitesboro S.T.O.P. Crime Program
Robert Giblin, NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services
Kenneth Grover, Jersey Central Power & Light Company
Thomas Johnson, Ulster County Sheriff Department
Rodney Kelley, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency
Thomas Mayer, Neighborhood Resource Center, Albany
Maureen McCloud, State University of New York at Albany
Stephanie McGhee, National Crime Prevention Council
Sheila Murphy, Russell Sage College
Mark Rabinow, NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services
Richard Recny, East New York Crime and Fear Prevention Program
George Sunderland, American Association of Retired Persons
Sheldon Tobin, State University of New York at Albany
David Valle, Rochester Police Department
Plainview Village Police Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The apparent subject of this report is crime; the less obvious, but more fundamental subject is isolation. We suggest that efforts to reduce crime against senior citizens will be more productive if we understand such crime to be one of the costs--a consequence--of the isolation that too often afflicts seniors even if they're not fearful of crime. (A study of one urban community found that about one-fifth of the older people "had no one to turn to in a crisis." (1))

Crime and Fear of Crime: the Disagreement on Incidence

Crime committed against senior citizens is a subject about which researchers disagree. Some studies suggest that seniors suffer from crime more than do others, (2) while other studies dismiss the claim that the elderly are disproportionately affected by crime. (3) Chapter 1 reviews this debate, which is conducted chiefly by academicians.

Whatever the overall distribution of crime across ages, it does appear that older people are more likely than others to be victims of crimes that are motivated by economic gain, are committed by strangers, involve contact with the criminals, and/or invade the victims' homes. One researcher found that seniors have a higher rate of robbery victimization than younger people and that "fear generated by robbery and other crimes dramatically changes the life of the elderly." (4) Another study found that fear of crime causes withdrawal from the community and reduction in social activity. (5)

Fear of crime affects more people than just those who have been mugged. It appears, rather, that fear of crime follows from perceptions of increasing general disorder. One writer has noted:

> [The] attitudes of citizens regarding crime are less affected by their past victimization than by their ideas about what is going

> on in their community--fears about a weakening of social controls on which they feel their safety and the broader fabric of social life is ultimately dependent. (6)

Fear complicates not only lives, but also the debate on incidence: If the incidence statistics indicate that seniors are less affected by crime than are other age groups, it may be because seniors feel more vulnerable and do not go out. Researchers might more accurately address the incidence question if they could measure the relative extents to which different age groups expose themselves as potential targets of street crime. It may well be that if measures could account for the lessened exposure that fear causes among the elderly, the data would indicate that elders are disproportionately more victimized.

Community and Crime Prevention

Looking Out For One Another

Community crime prevention can be both subtle and direct, both complicated and simple. It cannot be described by listing a definite and complete set of activities. Instead:

> The factors that make a neighborhood safe are many, but they certainly include community pride and cohesiveness, well defined geographic boundaries, and perhaps most important, the willingness of people to look out for one another. (7)

To "look out for one another" is apt and key; one study of convicted burglars found that "the majority of inmates said that merely being noticed by a neighbor was enough to deter them. All of them indicated that they would leave the area if challenged by a neighbor." (8) Another study found that "the characteristic which offenders looked for most in their victims was being alone." (9)

Community crime prevention contrasts with individualized ways of reacting to crime--e.g., avoiding certain streets or buying guns, watchdogs and stronger locks. (10) Where the feeling of community is strong, the streets are occupied essentially by neighborhood residents; where separateness and isolation are more common, the streets can be more the province of those who would create disorder. Chapter two describes several versatile community tactics that are explicitly intended to control crime. Neighborhoodwide activities include crime-

watch, safe corridors, home security surveys, property marking, telephone assurance, and escort services.

Organized community crime prevention is most often conducted by groups--civic associations, neighborhood improvement clubs, block clubs, business associations, voluntary service organizations, church groups--which preexisted within the neighborhood. (11) While "most people do not participate in collective responses to crime, . . . for persons involved in neighborhood organizations, there is a relatively high probability that they will participate in collective responses to crime." (12)

Two points about community crime prevention activities should be strongly noted: These activities do not occur instead of efforts to deal with phenomena that are often thought to be the root causes of crime (e.g., efforts such as programs of jobs, education, recreation and counseling, on one hand, and punishment, on the other hand), and they are not at all what is generally meant by the term "vigilantism." Rather, they involve close cooperation with local police; they often have official acceptance and sometimes result from local government initiative.

Local and State Programs

There is considerable variety in the community activities that can prevent crime and reduce fear. Some efforts simply augment police presence through formal, scheduled patrols; others employ additional explicitly crime oriented activities such as home security surveys. Some programs, however, focus less narrowly on criminal activity and instead work toward building community support networks that reduce isolation and almost incidentally make neighborhoods less inviting for street criminals.

Chapter 3 reviews a sample of local projects across the nation and state, and it describes state programs to stimulate and support the local efforts.

Three states--California, Rhode Island and New York--have significant programs to stimulate and support community crime prevention efforts. New York's program, more than Rhode Island's and far more than California's, emphasizes local community initiative. Although it requires cooperation and coordination with police, the Neighborhood Preservation Crime Prevention Act (NPCPA) (Chapter 55, Laws of 1983) authorizes the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) to award funds directly to community organizations pursuing crime prevention activities. DCJS can provide up to $60,000 annually for a local crime prevention effort. (Numbers of applications and levels of funding have necessitated average

awards of far less than the legal maximum; see chapter 3 for statistics.) Contracts are for one year, but are renewable up to a maximum of four years at the discretion of DCJS.

Crime Awakening Community

Several findings of this inquiry are frustrating, but fundamental.

- The problem of crime against senior citizens is both real and serious.
- The problem is complex, in great part because of the compounding effect of fear. If self-protection involves mainly bigger locks and more confined living, it brings isolation. Isolation, an unfortunate correlate of aging even without the influence of crime, removes people from the collection of neighbors whose mutual watchfulness actually reduces the likelihood of crime.
- Any remedy for such a complex problem is likely to also be complex. Declines in fear will not simply follow declines in incidence, especially if making life safer means locks and mace more than it means community ties.

The Current Response: Varied, But Not Coordinated

Government's responses to crime against seniors do seem appropriately variegated for such a complex problem. Local groups, the police, the State Office for the Aging (SOFA) and DCJS all try in one way or another to deal with the vulnerability that the syndrome of crime, isolation and aging constitute. But these responses occur largely independent of one another; the administration of the government response to crime against the elderly does not indicate recognition that the separate elements do indeed constitute a syndrome. Variegated response without coordination is fragmentation, and fragmentation at least makes for inefficiency. It also suggests that the interrelatedness of isolation and incidence of crime is not sufficiently appreciated.

While there is sensitivity within agencies to the true nature of the problem of crime against seniors, little or nothing suggests that the State and the localities have asked themselves whether their efforts to deal with crime and their efforts to deal with isolation could profitably conjoin.

Those designing government responses face a number of confounding questions. In fighting crime--crime in general and crime against senior citizens specifically--what proportion of our efforts should we focus narrowly on criminal activity, and what proportion should we focus more on ameliorating the background conditions that permit crime? In a world of finite public resources, how much should we spend on formal watchfulness and how much on activities, such as organizing block clubs, which build community bonds, reduce fear and thereby also increase the informal watchfulness available within a community?

The difficulty in choosing a mode of crime reduction is to find one that neither damages older people's quality of life nor encourages fearful people to be less fearful before actual conditions have become less dangerous. Several NPCPA-funded groups do perform both explicitly crime preventative activities and activities meant to heighten neighborhood identity. For instance:

- Several groups have telephone reassurance efforts that no doubt involve more than conveying information about crime prevention.
- One program adds crime prevention activities to an ongoing hot meals project.
- Some programs perform both typical crime prevention activities and basic organizing through the formation of block clubs.

Such groups suggest a synthesis which may be both instructive and effective. Their performance of both explicitly crime preventative activities and basic community organizing reflects the view that a high degree of community always improves the participation in and effectiveness of the explicitly crime preventative activities; further, it reflects the view that each approach, in itself, is in some places too limited to bring about safer neighborhoods. The synthesis reflects the view that the immediacy and urgency of jeopardy in some neighborhoods demands pointed attention--formal and quasi-formal policing, target hardening and dissemination of literature on self-protection--but that the complicating factor of fear requires that such activities must be supplemented with more basically integrative activities.

But while this synthesis exists in the minds and activities of a few people and organizations at both the State and local level, it is not part of explicit State policy and administration. There appears to be no formal effort or body that brings together the resources and insights of groups involved in crime prevention and those involved in reducing isolation, especially isolation among seniors. As a result, we miss some opportunities to improve community

crime prevention through community building and to spur community building with the concern that crime raises.

The examples of broad-scoped activity by some of the NPCPA groups suggests that NPCPA groups present an opportunity for the needed synthesis. It would be too simple, however, to suggest that DCJS should weight its funding approvals and disapprovals heavily with consideration of whether or not an applicant is engaging in community organizing. DCJS, in its funding decisions, must judge whether or not an NPCPA applicant's proposed activities will be crime preventative, and the agency ought to continue to hold applicants to a reasonable standard of demonstrability. The sight of patrollers on streets seems per se to demonstrate better the phenomenon of crime prevention than does the creation of a neighborhood organization that holds meetings, organizes craft fairs and publishes a newspaper. This is not to say that basic organizing is not crime preventative; it is simply not as demonstrably crime preventative, and this makes it harder to distinguish which community organizing effort merits funding and which does not.

It does seem possible, however, that the NPCPA groups are a resource which SOFA could employ in its efforts to better integrate senior citizens into vital communities. Danger of funding waste would be minimized inasmuch as the funding of an NPCPA group depends on the group's satisfaction of DCJS's specific requirements; the public monies given to these groups are for the performance of explicitly crime preventative activities. But once a group has been funded--in effect, once it has passed the quality control standard in DCJS's funding process--we might reasonably ask if it could, without weakening its specifically crime preventative activities, also address the matter of basic organizing and integration.

In this scheme of things, explicit crime prevention would be a prerequisite, and neighborhood organizing a supplement. Quality-control, fiscal considerations make it sensible to treat the basic organizing as subsequential, but we nevertheless may still recognize it as necessary. The number of potential agents constituted by the NPCPA groups alone is attractive. Just as attractive, however, is that NPCPA groups are voluntary and indigenous to their communities; outreach and integration occurring through NPCPA groups would decidedly not be occurring through the efforts either of professionals or outsiders. Such an approach would reduce reliance on professionals for the solution of problems and stimulate a sense of mutual personal responsibility among community residents. (13)

Chapter 4 discusses some practical, fiscal and legal considerations pertinent to such a proposal.

Recommendation: An Administrative Link

We recommend that the State consider the creation of a formal link among its crime fighting, aging and community development agencies. We propose that those who would compose such a link:

- explore the possibilities for employing anti-crime concerns and organs to catalyze more effective actions to reduce isolation within neighborhoods, and among seniors particularly; and
- search generally and continuously for ways of reducing the extent to which neighborhoods exhibit the conditions that make it easy for the disorderly to create disorder.

We suggest that without investigating such possibilities, we may be missing opportunities to "get more mileage"--perhaps very significant mileage--out of the currently independent efforts that the State funds. (Pennsylvania's Task Force on Elderly Crime Prevention, described in chapter four, offers something of a precedent.) The indigenous nature of NPCPA groups is one of their great attractions, and a second recommendation relates to it. We think the State should resist proposals to swing its anti-crime efforts back toward a more centralized model, such as California's (described in chapter 3). The NPCPA is entirely too young a program for such a swing to be based on a thorough review of its successes and failures.

Our recommendation for specific action conforms with those basic recommendations. The Legislature should direct SOFA, DCJS, the Department of State and the Crime Victims Board to consult about the creation and conduct of a body similar to Pennsylvania's Task Force, but with attention to New York State's particular crime fighting assets. Those consulting should develop a plan, and the Legislature should set a reasonable date (probably no more than 18 months) for issuance of a report.

If the findings of the consultation do not persuade otherwise, the Legislature should create the body and require an annual report of findings and initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

Crime and Fear of Crime as Effects of Isolation

The apparent subject of this inquiry is crime against senior citizens; the less obvious, but more fundamental subject is isolation among senior citizens.

It's plain that muggings and other incidents of disorder can cause isolation, as people seek safety after sunset behind locked doors. Loss of evening social activity is a high price, but people pay it. Less plain is that isolation permits and encourages crime. Street predators prefer to assault and rob those who are alone; street predators try to avoid observation.

Many readers may detect a "chicken and egg problem" here, as we suggest that crime causes isolation and isolation permits crime. Probably, both propositions are true--social scientists would call it "reciprocal causation." In this inquiry, however, we wish to clearly treat isolation as the root cause. Isolation happens to many senior citizens whether or not they fear crime. And while crime is a special worry for seniors, it's only one part of a set of unwelcome consequences when aging brings a decline of involvement with family, neighborhood, work, and local government. This isolation also brings poor nutrition and other insults to both physical and mental health.

We mustn't overstate the case; many senior citizens--perhaps most--create happily connected lives in a variety of urban and suburban circumstances despite the departure of children, retirement, loss of a spouse, and change of residence and consequent loss of contact with old friends. Some do so even when there is a drastic decline in income--often upon widowhood--which makes it harder to maintain connections.

But for some considerable number of senior citizens, these transitions are beyond management. We don't know exactly how many are isolated; academicians have explained isolation better than they have measured it. In New York State, it appears that about 31 percent of people aged 65 and over live alone; this is about one-fourth more than in 1970. (1) Such figures, however, do not tell us a

lot--a person living alone can be socially active, while couples may be isolated from the neighborhood around them. A study of one urban community found that about one-fifth of the older people had no one to turn to in a crisis. (2)

Isolation permits crime not just against seniors; rather, street crime in general happens most in those places where people of all ages do not have a sense of community, where neighborhood residents do not know and recognize one another and develop mutual concern through informal socializing as well as through formal, joint efforts to maintain and improve the neighborhood. Predators who frighten, endanger and victimize city dwellers, especially, find far greater opportunity in those places where people are not actively concerned about and do not look out for one another.

This is not a new observation; it has been understood by the people who in the last ten years have created hundreds of community crime prevention programs in cities across the nation. One problem with such efforts is that they exist mainly in those places where people do feel joined; there are many other neighborhoods where transience and dilapidation make the feeling of community unlikely. Community efforts, then, also are unlikely. Another problem is that while programs like neighborhood watch may make the streets safer, they do not necessarily reintegrate older people into neighborhood life. Fear of crime, whether or not it's warranted, causes some senior citizens to be so careful as to be reclusive, and such fear is best countered by the support each of us gains from the familiarity, personal involvement and mutual recognition one obtains by being a functioning part of a real community.

The Need for Basic and Continuing Efforts

Ten years ago, a leading researcher on crime and the elderly wrote: "The hard fact is that crime is devastating the lives of thousands of relatively defenseless older Americans." (3) While it's important not to exaggerate a description of older Americans as defenseless, we believe that things have not much improved. Senior citizens think, with considerable justification, that they are the preferred targets in crimes of larceny. It's easy to develop statistics that indicate that older Americans are the age group least often victimized, but such statistics do not account for the depriving self-confinement it may require to obtain that lower incidence of victimization.

That researcher also wrote:

> . . . perhaps most discouraging is the gaping disparity between what we know about the problem of crime and what we seem to be able to do about it. . . . As a country, we are weary of grappling with problems that defy our conventional remedy of money--and crime is in the vanguard of such defiance. (4)

There are different ideas on how to "clean up the streets." Some would increase numbers of police, assist them with citizen patrols, and instruct people in self-protection. Some would make prosecution more vigorous and sentencing more stringent. And some point to the need for youth employment and counseling programs to redirect the energies of the teenagers and young adults who are such a large part of the street criminal population.

All such ideas, it seems to us, make sense and should be pursued. But relative to senior citizens, especially, it is important to do more, for efforts to "clean up the streets" convey two messages: One message, the intended one, is that we are responding to the violations of personal safety and the continuing threats to it. Another message, however, is that it is indeed dangerous out there. For those who are isolated, the second message, unleavened by frequent contact with one's neighbors--contact that reassures one that the neighbors are decent and mutually concerned--is the one that is consistent with the aloneness and alarm they already feel, and it is therefore the one to which they will more likely attend.

Reducing crime and reducing the fear felt by isolated senior citizens (and, too, by disabled people fearing muggings and women fearing rape), who feel they can't leave their homes after dark, does require organization around the issue of crime. But it requires organization also for the broad range of social and progressive purposes for which Americans have distinguished themselves as "a nation of joiners." It is routine, daily, face-to-face conversation among people who know one another that best conveys to the fearful the understanding that they are surrounded more by decent people than by predators. And the more a place manages to integrate currently isolated people, the less attractive--the less opportunity-laden--will that place be for street criminals.

While it may seem that such a prescription is somewhat vague, the fact is that government already recognizes the need for strong communities. The State Office for the Aging fosters programs of outreach, transportation, friendly visiting and telephone reassurance for older New Yorkers. And the Department of Criminal Justice Services, with money made available by the Legislature under the

Neighborhood Preservation Crime Prevention Act, funds several local efforts which involve not only traditional, patrol-like activities, but also broad-scoped initiatives such as establishing block clubs.

With this paper, we hope to indicate that the Senate's interest in the problem of street crime in general and its effects on senior citizens' lives in particular is a continuing interest. Our focus is limited: we do not treat bunko schemes, which cheat people of their savings. Confidence "games," too, are atrocious and victimize people who lack easy access to a supportive and informative collection of relatives and friends. We focus on street crime, however, because it is street crime that circumscribes people's social lives.

We will describe state-funded, local programs to involve neighborhood residents in reducing street crime, and we will highlight a few of the local efforts which are distinguished by the intention to integrate citizens into generally more effective communities. The report's basic recommendation involves an increase in interagency cooperation that would give explicit recognition to the complexity of the problem.

The single contention we most wish to emphasize is that crime against senior citizens should be seen as one of the symptoms of the isolation into which aging has sent too many New Yorkers. Loneliness and fear are costs of isolation that individuals bear. But if that is not enough to warrant our concern, we should note that the resulting neglect of physical and mental well-being and the waste of human resources are costs that all of us bear through expenditures on a wide range of social services.

For anyone who expects that the problem of crime against senior citizens will simply yield to a single great surge of state and local efforts to "clean up the streets once and for all," this study will be disappointing. Crime against senior citizens will yield only to a continuous effort by both citizens and government, and it will persist as a problem as long as aging in America so often brings isolation. Reducing the incidence of assaults, however we understand them to come about, is important. We may find, however, that this particular crime fight will provide a great residual benefit: If we correctly understand assaults against our elders to be, in part, a consequence of their isolation, and then plan and act on the basis of that understanding, we may discover that we have developed basic means of treating the entire range of maladies that isolation creates.

CHAPTER 1
CRIME, FEAR OF CRIME, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY

Crime committed against senior citizens is a subject about which most of us feel emotional and about which researchers disagree. There has, at times, been alarm in the air: Some studies have indicated that seniors suffer from crime more than do others. (1) Some popular accounts suggest that the elderly are extremely fearful of crime and are locking their doors and becoming isolated within their homes. (2) A content analysis of the New York Times found that articles on crimes against the elderly increased from 5 in 1971 to 91 in 1977. (3) On the other hand, some academic studies and government reports have dismissed the claim that the elderly are disproportionately affected by crime. (4)

Crime is an emotional topic even without specific consideration for the elderly--polls repeatedly demonstrate that most Americans are concerned about crime. But in a society in which it is at least traditional to honor elders, crime against the elderly can seem particularly outrageous. The purpose of this chapter is to review the academic debate regarding:

- the actual incidence of crimes against senior citizens; and
- the extent of fear of crime among senior citizens and some explanations of that fear.

We will find that the specific nature of crime against seniors and their fear of crime complicates the measurement of incidence such that simple statistics on incidence probably understate the effect of crime against the elderly.

The Incidence of Victimization of Senior Citizens

Basic, Conflicting Claims

Analysts disagree on the extent of criminal victimization of the elderly. In his 1979 monograph, Crime Against the Elderly: Implications for Policy-Makers and Practitioners, Robert J. Smith expressed the frustrations of many who have studied this subject:

> Although some authors have advanced what appear to be definitive statements, the rate of criminal victimization of older adults is still a matter of debate. The problem of determining the extent of elderly victimization is compounded when data from national and community studies are compared (5).

Allegations of Crisis--It was not until the early 1970s that rationales for anti-crime programs began to emphasize how crime affected the elderly in particular. During this period, researchers often found or assumed that the elderly were more often victimized by crime, more likely to suffer severe physical and financial consequences, and more fearful of crime than were other age groups. (6) Observers and legislators proposed age-based policies and programs to deal with the problems of crime against the elderly, and the Crime Control Act of 1976 required each state seeking eligibility for federal funding of anti-crime activities to initiate special projects to prevent crimes against the elderly.

Among the first to turn scholarly attention to the frequency of criminal victimization of the elderly were Jack Goldsmith and Noel Tomas. (7) Goldsmith and Tomas published an article entitled "Crimes Against the Elderly: A Continuing National Crisis" in Aging, the journal of the U.S. Administration on Aging. Goldsmith and Tomas proposed that "there is a distinctiveness about crimes against the elderly and that when considered broadly in terms of the physical, economic, social, and psychological impact, these crimes warrant treatment as a special category." (8) They asserted that:

- older people are more likely to be victimized repeatedly--often by the same offender; and
- criminals are aware of the diminished physical capacity and vulnerability of the elderly and thus are more likely to seek out an elderly target. (9)

Other studies as well have suggested that seniors are highly victimized by crime and suffer more acutely than any other age group from its traumatic effects. (10) A 1980 National Crime Survey indicated that when robbed or assaulted, the elderly were more often physically injured than were members of other age groups. (11) Polls of seniors have indicated that they regard crime to be the biggest problem they face. (12)

Not A Crisis?--Challenges to these claims are implicit in survey-based reports of the U.S. Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics and the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. A 1973 LEAA study tried to gauge the extent to which persons aged 12 and over, households and businesses had been victimized by crime over a 12-month period. The sample consisted of 60,000 households in 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The LEAA report indicated (as a 1966 National Opinion Research Center (NORC) survey had proposed) that the elderly are least likely to be victims in most categories of crime. (13, 14) Whereas the rate of personal victimization for persons aged 20-24 was 201 incidents per 1,000 people of that age, the elderly suffered only 32 incidents per 1,000. Both the NORC and LEAA surveys concluded that the overall rate of criminal victimization tends to decrease with age. The same trend was found for crimes against households: Among the elderly, about 109 per 1,000 were victims of household crimes, as opposed to 302 per 1,000 among those aged 20-34 years.

The most recent data (now produced by the National Crime Survey) are recorded and calculated differently from the NORC data and are not readily compared with the NORC data. Table 1 contains the 1981 data in the categories most similar to the 1973 study categories. Data for 1981 depict the elderly as suffering the lowest rates of personal crimes of violence and theft.

Available incidence data for New York State do not permit an exact comparison, but it nevertheless appears that New York State does not deviate greatly from the national figures (see table 2)

Qualifications in the Debate and Research

Underestimation?--In 1975, the American University sponsored a National Conference on Crime Against the Elderly. Emerging from the conference was a volume entitled Crime and the Elderly: Challenge and Responses; edited by Drs. Jack and Sharon Goldsmith, it emphasized the ways in which criminological and gerontological research could be integrated. (15) Jack Goldsmith, with Tomas,

Table 1
Personal Crimes by Age of Victim
Incidents per 1,000 Persons, Nationwide

Age Group	Violence	Theft
20-24	68	133
25-34	44	101
35-49	23	78
50-64	13	51
65+	8	22

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Report to the Nation on Crime and Justice: The Data, Government Printing Office, 1983.

Table 2
Crime Victimization by Age Group

1983 Estimates

Age	Crimes of Violence (per 1,000 people)	Crimes of Theft (per 1,000 people)
12-34	48	98
35-49	24	79
50+	13	39

1986 Estimates

Age	Crimes of Violence (per 1,000 people)	Crimes of Theft (per 1,000 people)
12+	28.9	62.0
60+	8.7	29.1

Source: Raw incidence figures used in the calculation of the 1983 rates are from New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, The Criminal Victimization of Older New Yorkers, 1983. Figures for 1986 are abstracted from the 1986 update of that report.

had written the controversial 1974 article that claimed crime against the elderly constituted a national crisis. Despite revising some of his conclusions in the 1976 volume, Goldsmith remained confident that crime against the elderly was more widespread than the crime survey data indicated.

Goldsmith and Goldsmith proposed that although data indicates that the elderly are not "over-victimized" for some categories of personal crime (e.g., murder, rape), they may be over-victimized in other categories (e.g., fraud, larceny). The Goldsmiths maintained that survey data did not accurately measure the extent of elderly victimization because the data did not include such factors as exposure time (fear may keep the elderly off the streets) and reporting variances (the elderly may report crime less frequently). Goldsmith and Goldsmith charged that "reliance on raw crime statistics oversimplifies the crime problem and does not allow for analysis of [the full effects] of crime." (16) In an overview essay, Goldsmith and Goldsmith indicated that surveys which measure only reported crimes seriously underestimate crime's impact on the elderly. Pointing out the weaknesses of FBI annual crime reports, Goldsmith and Goldsmith suggested that "victimization surveys that project actual (as opposed to reported) crime rates indicate there are two or three times more crimes committed than reported to authorities." (17) They concluded: "Analysis of patterns of crimes against older persons suggest the need for a specialized index of crimes against the elderly. Such an index might, for example, focus attention on crimes such as purse snatching, medical fraud, con games and schemes, pension frauds, assault, retirement and land sale frauds, burglary, vandalism and abuse or neglect in nursing homes. (18)

Carl L. Cunningham also suggested that raw crime data do not truly measure the criminal victimization of the elderly and that there is a need for more locally oriented crime data. (19) Cunningham studied (under auspices of the Midwest Research Institute) elder Kansas City crime victims in 1972-1974. He claimed that "we are well into a crisis situation concerning the criminal victimization of the elderly who live in or near the higher crime areas of the cities," and in contrast to national data indications that the elderly are not disproportionately victimized by crime, Cunningham found that:

> The elderly living in or near certain neighborhoods of Kansas City . . . can be as much as eight times more vulnerable to serious crimes such as robbery, burglary, or major larcenies than a younger resident of a relatively safe suburb who works and shops in areas with low crime rates. (20)

Cunningham's study suggests, then, that crime against the elderly in certain locales--chiefly central cities--may occur at rates well in excess of the national averages and that national data, and especially national aggregated data, are not sensitive to that fact.

Certain Crimes?--Occupying somewhat of a middle ground in the debate is the work of Jaber F. Gubrium. Gubrium, in measuring victimization across various age categories, considered two types of data:

- a national LEAA survey of 10,000 households, reporting 2,098 victimizations; and
- regional surveys of victimization limited to a set of cities or districts within a specific urban area.

Gubrium's interpretation of the data is that the relationship is curvilinear. That is, criminal victimization is comparatively low among persons under age 20, rises to a peak in the age 20-to-50 categories, and declines after age 50. Regional surveys show a more linear track, with general victimization decreasing by age. "Although the evidence on the extent of general victimization in the youngest age categories is contradictory," Gubrium wrote, "there is consensus in the relatively low degree of victimization in old age (age 60 older)." (21)

Concluding that the risk of being victimized by crime generally is less among older persons than among younger persons, Gubrium then considered his findings in light of the available data related to specific kinds of crime. (For instance, are the elderly more frequent victims of purse snatching or pocket picking?) Here, his findings suggested that popular notions about targeted victimization may be correct: the data indicated that a woman over 60 is more likely to be a victim of malicious mischief and certain other minor crimes than a female of any other age. Gubrium summarized his research:

> Survey data do not support the popular belief that the aged as a group are the greatest victims of crime in general; [but] also, they do not repudiate the probability that old people may have a greater risk than other persons of being the victims of certain minor crimes. (22)

Conklin, too, found that in the categories of street holdups, purse snatches, and residential robberies, "citizens who are 70 years old and over have a victimization rate . . . more than 50% higher than the rate for the total population." (23)

Rhetoric Leading to Fear?--Categorically rebutting the idea that senior citizens are disproportionately victimized are Drs. Fay Lomax Cook and Thomas D. Cook. In a 1976 article entitled, "Evaluating the Rhetoric of Crisis: A Case Study of Criminal Victimization of the Elderly," (24) they argued that researchers have misinterpreted the data on elderly victimization. The data, they asserted, indicate "that the young are the most likely age group to be victimized." (25) Cook and Cook found that the elderly have a lower risk of being victimized by crime than any other age group. Their analysis of NORC data indicated that the most typical victim of robbery and assault, two crimes Goldsmith and Goldsmith link to targeted victimization of the elderly, is a young, low income, black male.

Cook and Cook, responding directly to Goldsmith and Tomas, have argued that victimization of the elderly does not constitute a national crisis (and therefore does not justify relatively large program funding). Citing U.S. Department of Justice data as well as the same NORC and LEAA surveys used by Gubrium, Cook and Cook conclude that while the elderly are by far the least victimized group, they may receive a disproportionately higher amount of government program funding than do the young, low-income black males that the data indicate are most in need of assistance. The danger, as Cook and Cook perceive it, is that the rhetoric of crisis will supersede good judgment, and as special interests compete for the finite amount of program monies available, the plight and problem of the young, urban, black male will go unaddressed.

The debate seems far from resolution. For instance, Cook and Cook used data that either summarized projected rates of victimization based on national surveys or consisted of raw numbers across categories of index crimes, as contained in the FBI annual crime reports. They did not address the need for local data (noted by Cunningham), nor did they consider either exposure time or the reporting problem.

But while Fay Lomax Cook rejects "the rhetoric of crisis," she does agree that senior citizens are indeed highly fearful of crime. (26) She asserts that the fear experienced by the elderly may be due in great part to popular allegations that "criminals are deliberately seeking out seniors as prime victims for robbery and attack." (27) This point has enormous implications for the debate about incidence.

Fear: Complicating Research, Complicating Lives

Over the last 20 years, fear of crime has increased markedly among people who have never been victims; this increase has been greatest among senior citizens. (28)

The consequences of fear of crime can be severe. People may protect themselves by installing new locks, avoiding crime-prone areas or purchasing weapons. Seniors sometimes respond to crime by isolating themselves:

- Goldsmith and Tomas hypothesized that:

> Awareness of increased vulnerability to criminal behavior has a chilling effect upon the freedom of movement of older Americans. Fear of criminal victimization causes self-imposed 'house arrest' among older people who may refuse to venture out of doors . . . the fear of being victimized can shape the daily life of an older person. (29)

- Lawton et al. concluded that because of fear of crime, many elderly greatly restrict their activities. (30)

- Lebowitz suggested that fear of crime may seriously diminish the quality of life enjoyed by the elderly. (31) The degree of security perceived by the elderly is a complex variable, but one that might dictate both their level of social interaction and their number of social opportunities.

- The Midwest Research Institute, too, concluded that fear often causes a serious reduction in older persons' social activities. (32)

Isolation may have especially troubling consequences for those who recognize specific tendencies in the incidence of violent crime against seniors. Antunes et al. found that violent crimes against the elderly occur primarily in the victims' homes. (33) Recognition of this finding by the elderly, who have already taken refuge in their homes, may compound the impact of fear of crime upon their lives. Indeed, Antunes et al. propose that the higher level of older people's fear stems largely from the recognition that if they are violently attacked, that attack may take place within their own homes; by a bizarre transformation, seniors' last refuge from crime becomes the area where they will most likely be attacked. It is no wonder that Reynolds and Blyth found that fear caused stress and anxiety. (34) The isolation of the elderly caused by fear constitutes a form of victimization--a physical and mental debilitation--that may be as serious as actual, personal confrontation with crime on the street.

The fear dimension suggests a data problem that Goldsmith and Goldsmith identified early in the debate. If the incidence statistics indicate that the elderly are less affected by crime than are other age groups, it may be because they feel more vulnerable and do not go out. Researchers might more accurately address the incidence question if they could measure the relative extents to which different age groups expose themselves as potential targets of street crime. It may well be that if measures could account for the lessened exposure that fear causes among the elderly, the data would indicate that elders are disproportionately more victimized.

Measuring Fear

In 1977, a National Crime Survey found a relationship between age and fear of crime in a sample of age groups in eight cities. (35) Those 65 and over experienced a higher level of fear than did the rest of the population. This finding was supported by a 1984 U.S. Department of Criminal Justice Services Sourcebook, which found that while the elderly less often expressed fear of having their property vandalized or household burglarized, they more often expressed fear of being injured by a robber on the street or by a burglar at home (see table 3).

Table 3
Fear by Age

	Percent Who Worry		
Age	Being Robbed on the Street	Being Injured by a Robber On the Street	Being Injured By a Burglar At Home
18-24	31	30	33
25-29	30	26	29
30-49	28	27	28
50-64	33	31	32
65+	36	33	35

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1984.

Antunes et al. maintained that "many surveys show that elderly persons are more fearful of crime than younger persons." (36) Clemente and Kleiman found that "for older people fear of crime is more of a problem than crime itself." (37) Using NORC surveys, Clemente and Kleiman concluded that the data "strongly support the assumption that the elderly are more afraid of crime than their younger counterparts." (38) Their analysis of the NORC surveys indicated 51 percent of those age 65 and over were afraid to walk around their neighborhoods at night. Only 41 percent of those under 65 were fearful. Females expressed higher levels of fear than did males, and a greater percentage of elderly females (69 percent) expressed fear than did the members of any other category. Male reluctance to admit fear was less prevalent in elderly males: 34 percent of elderly men (but only one percent of younger males) admitted fear.

Clemente and Kleiman did find race to be significant. Elderly blacks were overwhelmingly more fearful of crime than elderly whites, and elderly black females experienced fear more often than did the members of the other observed groups. The data indicated that about 47 percent of the white elderly expressed fear, as compared to 69 percent of the black aged. (39)

There is some dissent, however, on the relative extent of fear among age groups; Reynolds and Blyth, for instance, reported an inverse relationship between age and fear. (40) Lawton and Yaffe concluded that although fear of crime is important in determining psychological well-being, the elderly "are not necessarily made 'prisoners in their homes' by either crime or fear of crime." (41) Fear was found to be strongly associated with the level of age integration present in the planned housing environment Lawton and Yaffe studied, but did not increase unless the age mixing of residents was totally indiscriminate. Yin has offered two explanations of this discrepancy in findings:

- The relationship between fear of crime and age may vary between rural and urban settings; and
- different studies employ different measures of fear of crime. (42) Yin noted that there are different ways to measure "sense of security":
  - Lebowitz and the National Crime Survey both used "feels unsafe when out alone at night."
  - Other national polls used a variety of indicators such as "think that neighborhood crime rate has increased" or simply "feels unsafe." (43)

> Fear gauged by each of these measures may vary across age groups differently from fear gauged by others. Alston found that "feeling unsafe while out alone at night" is the measure which yielded the greatest age differences. (44)

Gender might be another complicating factor. A variety of accounts indicate that females are more fearful than males; (45) females comprise over 59 percent of New York's elderly population. At least one possible explanation for this gender difference has been proposed: Riger et al. argued that women may perceive themselves as less capable of self-defense, and they may be particularly fearful of crimes, such as rape, in which women especially are the targets. (46) It is possible this feeling is intensified in elderly females, many of whom are living alone: Lebowitz found that among the elderly, those with roomates less often expressed fear than did those without. (47)

Not the Number of Crimes, But the Kind of Crimes

Even if one accepted the views of those who argue that senior citizens are not disproportionately victimized overall, it would not be sufficient grounds to conclude that their fear of crime is unwarranted. What troubles the elderly may not be simply the number of crimes, but rather the kinds of crimes committed against them.

In brief, it appears that older people are more likely than other groups to be victims of crimes that:

- are motivated by economic gain;
- are committed by strangers;
- involve contact with the criminals; and/or
- invade the victims' homes.

Economic Motivation--During the 1973-1980 period, the ratio of robberies to assaults was 92 to 100 among the elderly, but only about 24 to 100 among younger persons. In other words, the elderly suffered about as many robberies as assaults, a finding that suggests that despite their comparatively low reported victimization rates, the elderly are especially targeted for certain types of crimes. (48) For instance, seniors may be regarded as "easy marks" for pocket picking and purse snatching. A New York City newspaper account of elderly

victimization reported that criminals refer to crimes against the elderly as "crib jobs" because "it is as easy as taking money from an infant." (49)

Strangers--The U.S. Department of Justice reports that while 64 percent of the incidents among the victim population as a whole involved victimization by strangers, 85 percent of elderly victimizations involved strangers. (50) Statistics for New York State also indicate that older victims have the highest proportion of incidents of robbery and assault by strangers (see table 4). Of the crimes against the elderly studied by Antunes et al., 71 percent--more than in any other age category--were committed by strangers. (51)

Contact with Criminal--The U.S. Department of Justice reports that the ratio of purse snatchings/pocket pickings--crimes of contact between victims and offenders--to personal larcenies without contact is 16 to 100 among the elderly, but only 3 to 100 among younger persons. (52) A 1983 report by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) updated these findings: In the category of personal victimization incidents, the predominant personal victimization reported by all age groups was larceny without contact between victim and offender, but the highest proportion of victimizations reported by those aged 50 or over were crimes of theft with contact (robbery and larceny with contact). Twenty-eight percent of elderly victimizations involved theft with contact; among those 35-49 years old and 12-34 years old, the respective percentages were 18 and 13. (53) (DCJS's 1986 findings were consistent: 27 percent of larceny with personal contact involved elderly victims. DCJS notes that this was the only cate-

Table 4
Estimated Percentage of Violent Crimes Committed By Strangers,
By Age of Victim
1979-81, New York State

	Age of Victims		
	50 Plus	35-49	12-34
Crimes of Violence	91.3	75.8	77.1
Robbery	98.9	94.1	89.3
Assault	77.1	56.5	70.7

Note: Includes data on rape, not shown separately.

Source: NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services, National Crime Survey, The Criminal Victimization of Elderly New Yorkers, 1983.

gory in which seniors' victimization share exceeded their share of the population. (54)) A leading scholar points out that "people react more strongly to victimizations which bring the offender into contact with the victim. These are also the crimes which carry the greatest risk of injury." (55)

Victimized at Home--The ratio of burglary (the most serious NCS household crime classification) to larceny (a less serious crime of theft without entrance) among households headed by the elderly was 89 to 100; among households headed by younger persons, it was 70 to 100. (56) Antunes et al., too, found that older victims of violent crimes were more likely than younger victims to be in their homes when the attacks occurred. (57)

Overall: "Random," Injurious Theft--It appears, then, that older people may face a situation worse than that suggested by the notion of "random crime." While it is indeed random in that criminals and victims do not know each other, older persons may perceive that because of age, they are selected as prime targets. John E. Conklin found that fear generated by seniors' higher rate of robbery "dramatically changes the life of the elderly." (58)

If perception of a higher incidence of robbery were not enough to induce a reasonable fear, there is also concern about the distinctive physical, financial, and emotional effects which these crimes--crimes of contact committed by strangers seeking economic gain--have on elders. Senior citizens understand the changes that aging brings and what that means vis-a-vis criminals. Contact is dangerous.

- Conklin found that elderly victims are more often and more severely injured. (59) Cook et al., too, found a greater proportion of injury among elderly victims. (60) In addition, self-reported health was found to be related to fear of crime: One researcher has proposed that "failing health may increase one's general feelings of vulnerability and helplessness." (61)

- Lebowitz reasoned that fear of violence and injury has much to do with the lack of support networks for many senior citizens. Seniors appreciate their physical vulnerabilities and know how easily a hard fall can result in serious injury. A considerable proportion of senior citizens live alone; if injured, they face a problem of needing care, but having no one to offer it. (62)

- The injuries are not narrowly physical. Cunningham found that:

> . . . of all persons who become targets of a criminal act, the elderly usually suffer most . . . [Because] they usually have relatively less physical and emotional resiliency than their younger counterparts . . . physical and psychic injury resulting from crime can leave a more lasting mark. (63)

The economic loss suffered from a robbery or larceny may seem small to the average wage earner, but can be significant to a person living on a fixed and marginal income. (Economic loss could include not only theft of money, but also expenditures required, for instance, for medical care or to replace broken glasses. Medical expenses for elderly victims typically amount to 25 percent of their monthly incomes. (64)) Loss of an amount that might be regarded as small or moderate by a younger victim can have a drastic effect on the quality of life accessible to an older person.

Fear, Strangers, and Community

We have suggested that if senior citizens are particularly fearful of crime, it's not unreasonable: they do seem to be primary targets of those kinds of crime that make neighborhoods seem unsafe. Also, we have observed that taking refuge from the streets is not an entirely effective response. Indeed, Antunes et al. have proposed that fear is particularly great among elders because they realize that despite seemingly best precautions, they are still vulnerable. (65)

Who's in Control?

Effective challenge of street crime and its effects has not had to await resolution of the debate about relative victimization of senior citizens, but it has required some concept of why street crime happens. If neither the streets nor homes provide sufficient security, it seems reasonable to suspect that the environment in general lacks adequate social control. One influential thesis is that fear of crime is part of a more general fear of growing disorder, that disorder and crime are linked. (66) Wilson and Kelling suggest a "broken windows" analogy: if a window in an urban building is broken and remains unrepaired, soon the rest of the windows will be broken; one unrepaired window is a signal that no one cares. "Serious street crime," Wilson and Kelling write, "flourishes in areas in which disorderly behavior goes unchecked. The unchecked panhandler is, in effect, the first broken window." (67) Untended disorder erodes social control. Lewis and Maxfield similarly suggested that "incivility" in the neighborhood--i.e., abandonement of buildings, drug deals, gangs "hanging out"--increased elders' fearfulness. (68)

Disorder--the apparent lack of control--is inherently fear-provoking among most people, but especially among those elderly who perceive a diminishing

of capacities. Pollack and Patterson speak of mastery of one's environment: If the elderly perceive some sense of mastery over their surroundings, they will be less fearful. (69) This is similar to an idea called "defensible space theory": one's ability to take control of one's environment can increase confidence and feelings of security. (70)

In rawer terms, the questions of a neighborhood resident become, "Does the neighborhood belong to predators on the streets or to law-abiding people? Are the people I pass on the street part of my community or are they potential assailants?"

Signs that the streets belong to peaceable people and are characterized by order, whether or not the neighborhood seems like a community, are likely to be reassuring; probably most obviously helpful is the presence of police. Law enforcement personnel certainly cannot be everywhere all of the time, but the traditional police patrol function (beat) does enhance neighborhood residents' sense of order and security. In their study of the New Jersey foot patrol program in Newark, Wilson and Kelling observed that the neighborhoods were composed of "regulars" and "strangers." Regulars included both "decent folk" and a few drunks and derelicts who "knew their place." Strangers were intruders and were viewed suspiciously, sometimes apprehensively. The police beat officers knew who the regulars were, and they knew the officers. The police officers saw their job as keeping an eye on strangers and making certain that the disreputable regulars observed some "informal but widely understood rules." These rules of order were defined and enforced in collaboration with the regulars on the street. (71)

Cohesion, the Appearance of Order, and Actual Order

Such beat officers are members of the community, particularly visible members whose presence is a sign of support. The lack of such community and of such signs can be troubling. One writer has noted that:

> [The] attitudes of citizens regarding crime are less affected by their past victimization than by their ideas about what is going on in their community--fears about a weakening of social controls on which they feel their safety and the broader fabric of social life is ultimately dependent. (72)

In 1938, Louis Wirth proposed that the urbanization process results in a reduction of the individual's "primary ties," thereby weakening the sense of

community in the neighborhood. (73) In 1975, Wilson made a similar observation: "Increasingly, the central city is coming to be made up of persons who have no interest, or who face special disabilities in creating and maintaining a sense of community." (74)

Sundeen and Mathieu suggested that those who feel a part of the community and think neighbors might call the police if a crime is committed experience less fear than others. (75) Clemente and Kleiman, who found that the urban elderly experience much higher levels of fear than the rural elderly, proposed that the social isolation endured by many urban elderly can be a strong predictor of fear. (76) Though the urban elderly may be surrounded by potential witnesses, they are not confident that if a crime is committed, assistance will be rendered (or even that anyone will call the police). The rural elderly, while often living in sparsely populated areas, seem more confident that if help is needed or requested, it will be given. (77)

Research by Gubrium confirmed the idea that being surrounded by community is effective and reassuring. Admitting that his data suggested that there are some age-related differences in victimization, Gubrium theorized that elderly victimization is affected by the degree of protectiveness in the local housing environment: ". . . regardless of type of crime, older persons are less likely to be victims on the premises of public housing than in private residences." (78) Public housing "protectiveness" consists both of supervised entry and, in many cases, homogeneity of age: The community is a set of people of about the same age, age is a readily identifiable characteristic, and seniors know that their assailants are usually younger. Segregation by age, however, may not make much sense as a social goal, and it would be better if some sense of community could be inspired among people of a variety of ages who live in the neighborhood. (79)

Community Crime Prevention?

It may be important to note that being mindful of seniors' crime problems should mean neither, on the one hand, ignoring the fact that they are not the only victims nor, on the other hand, regarding them as victims only. One writer contends that the portrayal of older people as the prime victims of crime is <u>both</u> inaccurate and dangerous. While the academics continue the complicated debate over incidence, the image of the elderly as helpless, dependent, and frail flourishes and, she charges, inflicts great damage upon the public image and

self-concept of those independent and resourceful senior citizens who wish to challenge the crime problem. (80)

Apparent community may be the critical variable determining which kind of response to crime will occur. Crime and fear of crime, to the extent that they cause isolating behavior, not only disrupt the lives of individuals; they also threaten the formation and maintenance of community. To the extent that people respond to crime with resolve that they will not be isolated from each other, they strengthen the conditions necessary to control and reduce crime and the fear of it. But they are less likely to respond with cohesion if there is not already a significant amount of cohesion--i.e., a significant amount of community. In the next chapter, we will explore this idea in greater detail.

CHAPTER 2
COMMUNITY AND CRIME PREVENTION

Community crime prevention can be both subtle and direct, both complicated and simple. It cannot be described by listing a definite and complete set of activities. Instead:

> The factors that make a neighborhood safe are many, but they certainly include community pride and cohesiveness, well defined geographic boundaries, and perhaps most important, the willingness of people to look out for one another. (1)

Informal Watchfulness

Looking Out For One Another

To "look out for one another" is apt and key; one study of burglars found that "the majority of inmates said that merely being noticed by a neighbor was enough to deter them. All of them indicated that they would leave the area if challenged by a neighbor." (2) As much to the point is a study by the Midwest Research Institute, where analysts found that "the characteristic which offenders looked for most in their victims was being alone." (3)

In her classic study, The Death and Life of Great American Cities, Jane Jacobs emphasizes the importance of concerned people's eyes. She suggests that bright street lights and improved housing alone will not enhance safety. "Unless eyes are there, and unless in the brains behind those eyes is the almost unconscious reassurance of general street support in upholding civilization, lights can do no good." (4)

Watchfulness of neighborhood residents, who regard their neighbors' safety within the neighborhood as the concern of all neighborhood residents, is a virtually routine characteristic of vigorous communities. Jacobs illustrates by relating an incident she witnessed in her New York City neighborhood:

> The incident that attracted my attention was a suppressed struggle going on between a man and a little girl of eight or nine years old. The man seemed to be trying to get the girl to go with him. . . . As I watched from our second-floor window, making up my mind how to intervene if it seemed advisable, I saw it was not going to be necessary. From the butcher shop beneath the tenement had emerged the woman who, with her husband, runs the shop; she was standing within earshot of the man, her arms folded and a look of determination on her face. Joe Cornacchia, who with his sons-in-law keeps the delicatessen, emerged about the same moment and stood solidly to the other side. Several heads poked out of the tenement windows above, one was withdrawn quickly and its owner reappeared later in the doorway behind the man. Two men from the bar next to the butcher shop came to the doorway and waited. On my side of the street, I saw that the locksmith, the fruit man and the laundry proprietor had all come out of their shops and that the scene was also being surveyed from a number of windows besides ours. . . . (5)

Such responsiveness, more probable in situations in which people recognize each other and in which they actively care about the conditions in their neighborhoods, strongly contrasts with individualized ways of reacting to crime--i.e., avoiding certain streets and buying guns, watchdogs and stronger locks. (6) Where the feeling of community is strong, the streets are occupied essentially by neighborhood residents; where separateness and isolation are more common, the streets can be more the province of those who would create disorder.

In a world of finite public resources, the police, no matter how conscientious, cannot be everywhere all the time. The "public peace of cities," Jacobs argues, is "kept primarily by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves. . . ." (7) And through the quoted anecdote, she indicates how people can apply controls and standards when not everyone is volunteering.

The power of perceptible community in a neighborhood seems to be such that incidents such as that which Jacobs described probably are most often preempted by the potential criminals' knowledge of watchfulness. As Jacobs cogently states:

> Safety on the streets by surveillance and mutual policing of one another sounds grim, but in real life it is not grim. The safety of the street works best, most casually, and with least frequent taint of hostility or suspicion precisely where people are using and most enjoying the city streets voluntarily and are least conscious, normally, that they are policing. (8)

Fear that keeps neighborhood people from the streets, then, may actually foster disorder; fear not only results from crime, but actually can permit it to increase. Isolation implicitly means decline in community and, it would therefore seem, decline also in the social control which community exercises.

A Special Case of Watchfulness: the Police

The importance of obvious watchful concern is interestingly confirmed by a study of communities' special watchers--the police.

British researchers, Colin Moore and John Brown, admitting that beat patrols may not initially seem an economically sound allocation of resources, nevertheless suggest that they may be the most valuable use of police. (9) They argue that police are not currently being used effectively because police administrators are putting them in cars--isolating the officers from the public and insuring that they only meet the public in a stressful situation. (10) Unable to cultivate community contacts and step out from behind the defensive barrier that the automobile constitutes, police officers are unable to perform all the unspecified and subtle tasks that are inherent to their position as peace keepers and order preservers in the community. A beat officer is a visible and respected member of the community; in the context of the neighborhood, the officer is an individual, not simply a uniformed presence. The officer is recognized by community residents and maintains an important link, between the community and the law, that is necessary for residential safety.

While foot patrols do not directly reduce overall crime rates, they do exhibit a presence that makes residents feel safer. This, in turn, brings more people out into the streets and may reduce the crime rate. Confirming this view is a study conducted by the Citizens Crime Commission and the Regional Plan Association. The study relied heavily on an earlier review of a New Jersey police foot patrol project (noted in chapter one) by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling. Wilson and Kelling found that foot patrols did succeed in reducing the level of fear experienced by inner city residents. After implementation of the police beat program, residents felt more secure than persons in areas not affected by the project, and they tended to believe that crime had been reduced. Citizens in foot patrol neighborhoods also expressed a more favorable opinion of police. (The researchers found that police officers, some of whom were in the beginning against the foot patrol programs, exhibited higher morale, greater job satisfaction and a more favorable attitude toward the public in their beat neighborhoods than did officers assigned to patrol cars.) (11)

As Wilson and Kelling noted, the crime-reducing effect of the New Jersey foot patrol resulted not so much from arresting felons as it did from clearly signaling the interest of persons on the scene--in this case, the police--in maintaining public order in troubled neighborhoods. (12) The effect was chiefly through visual presence--a subtle kind of social standards enforcement that flashed a message to criminal and law-abiding citizen alike; the image of the beat cop walking his assigned turf was the most immediate sign that disorder would not be tolerated in this community. Once that image was reinforced by regular arrest of criminals, drunks and others who violated order in the community, people did begin to come out of their homes. Crime did not necessarily recede directly in proportion to arrests, but with the perception that disorder had been cleared from the streets, the community gave the appearance of stability. And as more and more people filled the streets and felt confident of their environment, the crime rate did drop.

Organized Watchfulness: Community Crime Prevention

Residents of many communities have chosen not to limit the crime preventative effect of their concern to such subtle processes; instead, they have added efforts that are explicitly intended to control crime. It is important to emphasize that these more formal efforts are not at all what is generally meant by the term "vigilantism." Rather, they involve close cooperation with local police, and they have often enjoyed official acceptance and sometimes resulted from local government initiative. The U.S. Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, for instance, offered funding for the "mobilization of community and neighborhood residents into effective self-help organizations to conduct anti-crime programs within their communities and neighborhoods" and to "encourage neighborhood anti-crime efforts that promote a greater sense of community and foster social controls over crime occurrence." (13)

The informal kind of social control which Jacobs described might be thought of as generally unfocused--knowledge of it preempts disorderly actions, although it can emerge observably in response to a circumstance or incident that does seem to threaten neighborhood order. Usually, it is not obvious. Explicit crime control activities, on the other hand, are by definition quite focused: they occur through formal organizations which neighborhood residents created,

either for other social purposes before adding the crime control activities or for crime control purposes particularly.

It does appear, in fact, that organized community crime prevention is more often conducted by groups--civic associations, neighborhood improvement clubs, block clubs, business associations, voluntary service organizations, church groups--which already exist within the neighborhood. (14) Lavrakas and Herz found that:

> . . . being a member of a community organization or neighborhood group leads to people's involvement in neighborhood based anti-crime efforts. . . . it is those citizens who have a vested interest in their community . . . who like to join together with groups of people for some specific purpose and thus actually become members of local groups, who are <u>most likely</u> to attend a crime prevention meeting. (15)

DuBow and Podolefsky noted that "most people do not participate in collective responses to crime" [but] "for persons involved in neighborhood organizations, there is a relatively high probability that they will participate in collective responses to crime." (16)

Organizations, whatever their origins and purposes, are the vehicles through which neighborhood residents collect and focus community energies. Some academicians think of local organizations as an "opportunity structure"; (17) they offer the means by which community members can obtain meaningful local attention to their concerns. And in general, the greater the number and vigor of organizations a neighborhood exhibits, the more community spirited we could reasonably take it to be.

It is ironic that the areas that most need community crime prevention activities may be the ones least able to conduct them. The communities with the greatest readiness to undertake explicit, formal anti-crime activities--i.e., those communities with the most developed "opportunity structures" of existing organizations--are very probably also the communities which already have strong informal crime control through "looking out for each other." Those areas in which, on the other hand, individualized responses are the chief responses are areas which <u>per se</u> are less community spirited, and they more likely do not have vibrant organizations through which to conduct explicitly crime preventative activities.

We could expect to find that the more community a neighborhood has, the lower is the level of disorder that causes concern and action. This is not only

because people who care more about their neighborhood and about their neighbors are inclined to respond faster to perceived threats to the neighborhood and neighbors, but also because a strong community--one with vibrant organizations--has the capacity to respond "before things get worse."

It would be difficult, therefore, to overstate the importance of the prerequisite of "community" in the term "community crime prevention"; one study suggests strongly, in fact, that "attempts to increase the level of involvement in neighborhood groups (for whatever reason) are likely to have the effect, indirectly, of increasing participation in anti-crime activities." (18) Indeed,

> . . . it is the more socially integrated, rather than those more concerned about crime or more fearful, who become involved in community groups and thereby participate in community crime prevention programs. (19)

And the act of participating itself is comforting: Crime control theorists suggest that strong social and residential ties to one's community reduce fear. (20)

So far, we have not discussed the "prevention" aspect of "community crime prevention." It is perhaps a less complicated idea than community. One well-accepted definition of crime prevention is "the reduction or elimination of the desire and/or opportunity to commit a crime." (21) Experts speak of a "crime triangle" composed of three factors: desire, ability and opportunity. All three factors are necessary in order for a crime to occur. Remove one or more factor, and a crime will not be committed. Little can be done to reduce ability, and regulating desire has proved to be very difficult; minimizing opportunity, then, is the most effective course of action. Community crime prevention is built on the idea of opportunity reduction. Its conceptual simplicity, however, does not rule out variety; there are many ways by which both individuals and organizations can reduce the opportunity to commit a crime. Some ways--for instance, installing better locks--are more passive than others, such as evening patrols by neighborhood residents who act as supplementary eyes and ears for the police.

Before reviewing some of the most successful kinds of community crime prevention activities, two points should be strongly noted:

- These activities do not occur instead of efforts to deal with phenomena that are often thought to be the root causes of crime (e.g., efforts such as programs of jobs, education, recreation and counseling, on one hand, and punishment, on the other hand). Rather, they are best seen as attempts by neighborhood residents to control the

incidence of crime until the time when, if ever, those other kinds of programs render prevention unnecessary (or at least less necessary).

- Community crime prevention activities occur in cooperation with local, citywide law enforcement efforts; the police are sought out for guidance. Very often, police representatives regularly address and train neighborhood residents, and cooperation with the police department as the lead agency is the norm.

Neighborhoodwide Efforts

Among the best-known neighborhoodwide activities through which communities attempt to prevent crime are crimewatch, safe corridors, home security surveys and property marking. (Classification and names for community crime prevention efforts are not well-settled; others may classify these activities differently.)

Crimewatch--Crimewatch programs, initiated in many cities during the 1970's, may take two forms:

- Blockwatch is a crime reporting network established among neighborhood families who agree to keep an eye on one another's home. They share information about family habits (such as always leaving a light on at night) and compile a telephone pyramid list. If suspicious activity is observed in the neighborhood, the witness calls the police and a neighbor specified on the pyramid list. This neighbor, now informed of the incident, continues the telephone network by calling other neighborhood residents; this is repeated until the entire block is aware of potential criminal activity. Such notice serves to warn neighbors as well as increase the number of witnesses available to police if a crime is committed.

- Neighborhood Watch helps to extend police coverage through trained civilian patrols. Patrollers provide additional eyes and ears on the street: In groups or singly, and armed only with a whistle or walkie-talkie, the patrol volunteers looks for suspicious and disorderly behavior and reports directly to the police or a central dispatcher. Police reaction time is often improved significantly, and police ties to the community are maintained and strengthened.

The goal of community crime prevention strategies, then, is not to supplant the police, but rather to extend and maximize police service to the neighborhood. The best programs provide a schedule of public meetings between the police and neighborhood residents. In conjunction with the police, neighborhood watch organizations also conduct home security surveys, disseminate crime prevention tips and maintain positive relations between neighborhood residents and police. Volunteers can provide special crime prevention services such as frequently checking on disabled residents, installing improved locks on doors and

windows and escorting particularly vulnerable people as they travel from their homes to banks, stores, or medical offices.

Safe Corridors--The "safe corridor" idea might be used in conjunction with or in lieu of an established escort service. Such corridors are created when citizen volunteers saturate the neighborhood areas most frequently used by residents as they go about their daily routines. Depending on the size of the area to be covered and the number of volunteers available, the safe corridor personnel might concentrate on a city's banking or shopping district one or two days a week, or they might select times when some people feel most vulnerable (such as when Social Security checks arrive). Volunteers are posted at regular intervals on the street and are easily recognized by a distinctive photo ID card that is prominently displayed. Volunteers provide a presence and report suspicious activity to the police by phone or walkie-talkie as soon as it occurs.

Improved Home Security--The improvement of home security measures, sometimes referred to as "target hardening," is perhaps the easiest way community residents can protect themselves against crime. Most crimes occurring in urban areas are crimes of opportunity; for instance, an inadequately locked door or open window may invite burglary. Because most urban crimes are not committed by professional criminals, some basic protective measures can help to minimize the risk of personal and property crimes.

In a typical home security program, trained community staff, police, or agency representatives inspect residences to ascertain the level of security, identify potential problems and recommend needed protective measures. They can help install police-approved locks and otherwise instruct residents in personal crime protection; such a program, for instance, might also convey information about techniques for protection against personal crimes such as purse snatching and pocket picking.

Property Marking--Property marking programs, simple to establish and inexpensive to maintain, are an important part of many community crime prevention programs. To deter burglaries, discourage fencing of stolen merchandise and assist in returning recovered property to owners, a property identification engraving tool is provided to residents by neighborhood watch or another concerned neighborhood organization. The electric engraving device is used to mark household valuables with the owner's driver's license or social security number. After engraving is completed, trained community residents inspect the household (check also for the presence of other security measures) and award decals that are prominently displayed to warn potential burglars that household valuables

have been marked. To ensure the integrity of the program, these decals are made available only after inspection.

Focus on Senior Citizens

How do such programs relate specifically to crime against senior citizens? The most effective efforts for the elderly--efforts which will not isolate them and which will deal with fear--are efforts that make the entire area safer. They are efforts that make it apparent to senior citizens that the neighborhood is indeed a community and that its people are on their side. If, as Wilson and Kelling maintain, crime and fear of crime are based on disorder, then nothing can reduce fear of crime until order is observably reestablished. The security of New York's elderly population, then, is considerably dependent upon the level of security that can be ensured for all New Yorkers.

But while neighborhoodwide programs may be the most effective, crime preventative programs created especially for senior citizens could be useful nevertheless. There are several kinds of possibilities for what Goldsmith has called "segmental" efforts. (22) Some of them are versions of community-wide efforts:

- Public Housing Patrols--The crimewatch idea can be applied to large senior citizen apartment housing; the main purpose is to protect a building and the surrounding grounds by preventing strangers from freely entering. Patrols are often organized by tenant associations which recruit volunteers to observe building corridors, lobbies and other public areas.

- Home Security Assistance--Senior citizens may not have the financial or physical means to implement home security recommendations, and once security weaknesses are pointed out, they may experience tremendous fear. Home security programs could offer some small financial assistance, and they could more easily offer installation assistance. Inspectors could also be trained to speak realistically about residential crime in order to help people distinguish reasonable fear from unreasonable fear. Instruction on techniques for protection against personal crimes such as purse snatching and pocket picking might be especially helpful to the elderly, who often appreciate their special kinds and levels of risk, but may not know how they can act--other than avoiding the streets--to make themselves less attractive targets.

Other kinds of ideas are more likely to be used mainly to protect vulnerable populations:

- Street Self-Protection--Even the most aggressive home security measures cannot protect the elderly once they leave their residences and go out on the street. Training that emphasizes alertness to surroundings and appearance and such self-protective measures as carrying only small amounts of cash and using direct social security checking deposit can make the elderly safer and make them feel safer. Such efforts could be conducted as part of a general senior service center offering and could be taught by trained senior volunteers.

- Telephone Assurance Programs--Local volunteers, working from a list of elderly neighborhood residents, can call people regularly to check on their health and safety. This can be particularly comforting to those who rarely leave their homes. But the telephone program, enhancing general community communication, can also serve as a network for crime prevention information: Elderly victims, afraid that their crime experiences might not be serious enough to report to the police (the main reason the elderly do not report their victimization), might be more willing to call or mention the experience to telephone assurance representatives.

- Escort Services--The elderly express great confidence in escort service programs across the country. This service is valuable because it reduces not only seniors' vulnerability to crime, but also the social isolation many of them experience. Volunteers escort elder neighbors to and from necessary destinations such as banks, supermarkets, social service agency offices, community social gatherings and medical facilities.

Community Spirit and Organizational Effectiveness: Mutual Reinforcement

In the next chapter, we will review some actual examples of some of these kinds of efforts. Before doing that, however, it is important to reemphasize some points.

However effective such specific activities are, they are subordinate in importance to the feelings of community out of which they can arise and, perhaps more interestingly, which they can engender. Like the police, watch volunteers cannot be everywhere all the time; no affordable amount of organized effort can substitute for the pervasive watchfulness that results from true community. Programs like crimewatch help to make neighborhood residents--directly affected by crime, but usually left out of the law enforcement process--part of the solution to the crime problem. They reinforce the idea that community residents can make a difference, and they observably bring people together and thereby help build community.

If we have spoken little of activity that concentrates on the crime-related fears of senior citizens, it is because it ultimately does not seem sensible to expect senior citizens to become less fearful if the amount of crime around them does not decrease or the level of support around them does not increase. In any case, it is not sensible to purchase security at the cost of greater isolation.

Some analysts, most notably the sociologist Emile Durkheim, have suggested that crime may elicit a unifying force: Durkheim proposed that because crime is a general problem affecting all population segments of a place, it helps to pull them together, i.e., it helps to create community. (23) Another observer, however, offers a sharply differing view. In an analysis of the murder of the Clutter family in a rural Kansas town (a crime that served as the basis for Truman Capote's popular novel, In Cold Blood), John Conklin challenges Durkheim's theory. Conklin found that in the wake of the murders, neighborhood attitudes evolved from shock and disbelief to outright mistrust of friends and neighbors. Many town residents purchased weapons and isolated themselves from the community. (24)

Clearly, in this case and presumably elsewhere, crime seriously fragmented the local sense of both order and interdependence. Such mistrust and alienation may be intensified in the urban environment and may have its greatest effect on the elderly, who often are already isolated by processes related to aging. (25) Senior citizens, then, probably have more to gain from enhanced community than any other group.

So, community crime prevention programs may have their greatest effect not through specific instances of apprehension and deterrence, but through helping to melt barriers in places which have a high incidence of isolation. Such programs can catalyze greater feelings of community, and those feelings can then provide more people and energy for those very programs. Here, for instance, is the judgment of the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Justice regarding the Hartford Neighborhood Crime Prevention Program:

> Crime and fear are good organizing issues. Prior to this Crime Prevention Project, Asylum Hill was considered impossible to organize; without the crime and fear issues to establish the necessary bond, it might have remained unorganized. (26)

Community crime prevention programs may be less effective in under-organized neighborhoods (i.e., neighborhoods with less community), but

ultimately, they may be even more important for such neighborhoods than they are in the well-organized neighborhoods. In the latter kind of neighborhood, specifically crime preventative activities are one of several kinds of activities that help to preserve community; if crime preventative activities fall into disuse (perhaps because they simply are not needed), the preexisting and continuous multi-purpose organizations will continue to provide vehicles for maintaining and focusing community feeling and efforts. In under-organized neighborhoods, crime preventative activities may have a more far-reaching effect: They may engender, through the associations they foster, multi-purpose organizations which will carry on, more subtly and pervasively, the building of the kinds of communities in which organized crime prevention is less necessary. In this way, then, community crime prevention can help to create rather than simply preserve community.

CHAPTER 3
LOCAL AND STATE PROGRAMS: A SAMPLE

This chapter will describe some communities' efforts to meet the challenge of crime, mainly street crime. While many of these efforts involve some special attention to the elderly, the objective of most of them is to protect all neighborhood residents. This conforms with the idea that the security enjoyed by population segments thought to be particularly at risk depends on the security enjoyed by all; disorder, to whatever extent it exists in a community, will visit its effects disproportionately on those community residents who are more isolated or weaker.

Community crime prevention activities happen partly because we know that it is not sensible to expect that the traditional, designated law enforcers can completely protect us. There is considerable variety in the community activities that can prevent crime and reduce fear. Some efforts simply augment police presence through formal, scheduled patrols; others add crime-oriented activities such as home security surveys. Some programs, however, focus less narrowly on criminal activity and instead work toward building community support networks that reduce isolation and almost incidentally make neighborhoods less inviting for street criminals.

Community crime prevention efforts which exclusively buttress police patrolling do address, somewhat indirectly, the problems of fear and isolation. When patrollers are on the streets, residents once afraid to venture out of their homes probably feel more secure. But some come out of their homes only when the patrollers are nearby and probably think it practical always to consider a critical question: What happens when the patrollers are not around?

Patrolling, while reassuring for residents and deterring to the disorderly, inherently sends the message that there is jeopardy on the streets, that there is a struggle occurring over whether or not the streets are "ours." Those who are isolated or infirm--those who are the weakest--understandably find it

fear-provoking to use the streets when the neighborhood's designated protectors are not obviously around, and there simply are not enough people and financial resources for patrollers to be on the streets all the time.

There is no substitute for patrols--formal watchfulness--by both police and other community members. But if the justifiably fearful are to regain normal access to the streets, they must have something else: identity within a vital neighborhood community. They need recognition by their neighbors, they need to know they're recognized, and they need the opportunity for community involvement that brings such recognition. They need to be reasonably confident that they are part of a robust collection of people who are concerned about their neighborhood and about the people with whom they share that neighborhood.

Again, such integration is no substitute for formal watchfulness, but watchfulness alone may not much help those residents who are isolated. The best circumstances are those in which community is already vibrantly present; formal watchfulness then quickly and simply braces the existing, more or less orderly conditions. A more difficult circumstance occurs in areas where the flagrancy of crime has spurred the active and strong to begin patrolling and other police-like efforts, but where residents would have otherwise remained relatively unconnected. In such areas, there has not yet developed the involvement necessary for the more isolated people to enjoy the increased safety that patrolling creates. And it is in such areas that we might hope that anti-crime efforts will catalyze more community, especially inasmuch as little heretofore has proved to be a catalyst.

Diagnosing a lack of community and generally prescribing more community are easy to do; inventing ways of actually obtaining more community is far harder. The chief purpose in this chapter is to review a variety of actual community crime prevention efforts in order to discover both what is usual and what is possible. We will find that across the nation and, especially, in New York State, there are indeed innovators who have tried to lessen both crime and fear of crime in ways that promote lasting, broad-scoped affiliation.

Some National Examples

At least hundreds (and probably thousands) of localities across the nation have community crime prevention programs. This section presents a few

noteworthy examples. Approaches that are more narrowly policing seem to predominate, but there is interesting variation. The variation and the mixes of traditional policing approaches with broader, integrative approaches probably reflect the variation in community conditions and needs; a well-integrated community threatened with an increasing crime rate does not need to further integrate its members, but rather to simply marshall their resources toward solving that problem.

Some programs use patrols to make the streets safer; others reach out to people in their homes in order to educate them and promote reasonable confidence about living in their neighborhoods. Some activities are conducted by people in the course of their jobs; and one kind of program uses television to create interest in crime prevention.

We do not have a definite measure of the effectiveness of these programs. This is perhaps to be expected in a field in which statistics have always been confusing, and it is especially to be expected inasmuch as record-keeping requires time and money; community organizations would rather use their resources directly for their purposes rather than for difficult documentation of their efforts.

Detroit and Birmingham: Helping the Police

Detroit--In response to a Kansas City study regarding the effect of police patrol on the degrees of security and fear felt by urban residents, Detroit police administrators decided to revise their crime prevention approach. Much in contrast to the work of Wilson and Kelling, the Kansas City study suggested that increasing or decreasing the number of police patrols had "no effect of any consequence on crime, citizen fear, or satisfaction with police services." (1)

The new strategy involved citizen participation to reduce crime in several selected neighborhoods. These neighborhoods were used as experimental areas to gauge the effectiveness of a crime prevention program that involved police and citizens working together. The test neighborhoods had suffered a steady increase in crime over an extended period, with especially high rates of burglary and street robbery. Results of the new approach would be compared with a selected control neighborhood, located about four miles from the test areas and having demographic and crime characteristics very similar to those of the test neighborhoods.

The Detroit project relied heavily on neighborhood watch patrols. The citizen/police street patrols, however, were supplemented by educational campaigns, target hardening and victim assistance services. The administrators carefully attended to the relationship between citizens and the police, emphasizing the need for a partnership. Here are some details of the project.

- Police Patrols--Police walked assigned beats and developed contacts with community residents. Officers performed traditional functions, such as answering calls, investigating crimes, and writing reports, as well as providing general services to the public.

- Citizen Patrols--Community residents, organizing on the standard neighborhood watch model, established patrols in supplement to the police beat officers. They reported suspicious activity to the police dispatcher.

- Security Surveys--Police crime prevention officers contacted both residential and commercial community residents and provided information about the most effective security measures, including better lighting, stronger doors, deadbolt locks, watchdogs and electronic surveillance devices.

- Victim Assistance--Recognizing that crime victims often feel left out of the criminal justice process, Detroit officials formed a victim assistance bureau. A crime prevention officer maintains contact with the victim as the suspect moves through the judicial process. The officer keeps the victim informed of the progress of the case and also passes along information and tips that might prevent future victimization.

Crime in all categories in the test neighborhoods decreased after the program was introduced. The target area experienced a 61-percent reduction in burglary (shown as Breaking & Entering (B&E) Dwelling in table 5) and a 58-percent reduction in total crimes reported. In contrast, the control area recorded only a 12.6-percent reduction in burglary, with a total decline in all crimes of just 10 percent.

The Detroit program has been successful not only in mobilizing the community and reducing crime, but also in easing the level of fear. Before the program, only 6 percent of the surveyed residents indicated that they felt "very safe" being out alone in the neighborhood at night; just one year after the crime prevention program was in place, 30 percent said they felt "very safe." This rising level of public confidence was expressed in more general terms as well. Before the program, residents of the test neighborhoods were asked how fearful they were of a crime happening to them, their families, or their property. Forty

Table 5
Crime Trends, Detroit

Target Area

	Incidents			
	1977	1978	1979	% Decline
Rape	10	6	4	-60
Robbery	57	30	25	-56
B&E Dwelling	253	131	97	-61
Larceny	17	11	9	-53
Larceny from Auto	99	58	49	-51
Purse Snatching	31	20	12	-61

Control Area

	Incidents			
	1977	1978	1979	% Decline
Rape	8	9	8	-0
Robbery	52	40	43	-17
B&E Dwelling	206	197	180	-12.6
Larceny	6	13	9	+50
Larceny from Auto	94	80	89	-5
Purse Snatching	7	9	4	-32

Source: Detroit Police Department, The Detroit Crime Prevention Model, 1981.

Note: Figures are as they appear in the source. Recalculation may result in modest differences in the percent declines.

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percent responded that they were "very fearful." After one year of the crime prevention program, only 12 percent indicated that they were "very fearful."

Birmingham--Another crime control program emphasizing community involvement is that of Birmingham (Alabama). Birmingham's efforts are organized on the basis of the neighborhood block. A sponsoring committee publicizes a date for a meeting and tries to attract as many block residents as possible. At the meeting, the committee explains the fundamentals of the blockwatch approach and introduces local police officers. The officers give citizens an accurate account of the extent and type of criminal activity in their community as well as de-

scribe possible steps to reduce their chances of criminal victimization. Police officers provide technical assistance and information if residents seem interested in participating in a blockwatch effort. (2)

- The police compile statistical information to ascertain the types of crime prevalent in the area.
- Signs are posted at the ends of participating blocks to discourage burglars and establish community identity.
- Decals and broadsides are placed in the windows of residences.
- Regular meetings maintain lines of communication between the police and public.

Sergeant John G. Rye, commander of the Police Department's Research and Development Unit, has noted that:

> . . . in those blocks which have subscribed to the program, the effect has been dramatic. In several instances when a neighborhood with a high crime rate created a neighborhood block watch, the rate actually dropped to zero. Such figures effectively demonstrate that the program does work and that neighborhood and citizen involvement does pay high dividends both to the community and the police department. (3)

Cottage Grove, Baltimore, and California CIPPS: Outreach and Involvement

Senior-Citizen Crime Prevention Program--In Cottage Grove, Oregon, the crime rate nearly doubled in the period 1974-1975. (4) Senior citizen volunteers were encouraged to participate in a police training program and assist local law enforcement officials in a property marking program. Wearing blue blazers adorned with the police department emblem, the senior volunteers conducted a door-to-door campaign to identify security weaknesses. Decals warning potential intruders that household property had been marked with an identification number were awarded to residents after property marking was completed.

Although the Cottage Grove project began as a crime prevention program, volunteers soon found that they were becoming far more than crime prevention specialists. Local residents used the volunteers as links to city hall and repeatedly expressed their frustration in dealing with local social service agencies. Volunteers found that many residents did not know where to go for assistance or were unaware of the programs available to them. Senior volunteers

tried to become well-versed in the operations of county, state and federal agencies in order to provide accurate information to residents about Social Security, food stamps, welfare, Medicare and other resources. Quite unexpectedly, program administrators found that volunteers had moved naturally beyond the stated crime control function into a social function, serving as important community information sources. Crime prevention volunteers were respected and trusted by residents, and seniors often sought their advice. The volunteers' success in this social capacity resulted in program administrators' absorbing this service into the crime prevention program. (5)

Crime Prevention Education for the Elderly in Baltimore--In Baltimore, city officials used an educational campaign to help seniors learn about crime prevention. The program offered both crime prevention tips and explanations of how and why crime occurs. Funding for the program was provided by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration Impact Program. The main objective of the project was the prevention of robbery, burglary and assault, crimes that data indicated most frequently victimized elderly Baltimore residents. The informational program consisted of three ninety-minute sessions occurring over a period of three weeks. Each of the three sessions focused on one of the three crimes of concern. The program was presented in eight cycles at different locations throughout Baltimore. (6)

The organizers' original goal was to attract 2,000 out of the total 140,000 Baltimore seniors. The final attendance total for the course in the first year was 1,992 seniors attending all three sessions, with well over 2,000 attending any one class. (7) Perhaps most significant, however, was that most of the seniors who attended the sessions consequently became involved in some other community group, such as nutrition centers, Golden Age Clubs and senior citizen centers. (8)

The California Attorney General's Consumer Information and Protection Program for Seniors (CIPPS)--CIPPS was implemented by the California attorney general in 1972 as an effort to enhance communication between older residents and local criminal justice personnel. (9)

CIPPS encourages seniors to become involved in local senior centers and neighborhood organizations. Day-long informational sessions that bring seniors together are scheduled in communities across the state. At these conferences, there are presentations concerning common crime scenarios, street crimes, consumer fraud, and burglary prevention. Other sessions focus on health care, insur-

ance, and auto repair. The presentations are by police officers, district attorneys and consumer affairs staff from state and local offices. The program uses lectures, films and free literature to emphasize ways by which the elderly can protect themselves from crime. (10)

CIPPS provides information; it is hoped that seniors who participate will pass this information along to other community residents and that this contact will encourage others to become involved in community crime prevention efforts. Since the program began, more than 10,000 California seniors have attended CIPPS conferences. (11)

Seattle: Keying on Burglary

In 1972, the City of Seattle surveyed residents and found that they were more concerned about burglary than any other crime. The City's Law and Justice Planning Office (LJPO) studied the incidence and patterns of burglary in Seattle and found that:

- In over 1/3 of the reported burglaries, thieves entered through unlocked doors and windows;
- a majority of victims had not marked their property to discourage burglary and to help recover stolen items;
- most burglaries occurred at times when they could be witnessed by citizens; and
- traditional police patrols could not saturate neighborhoods to the extent required to prevent the incidence of burglary.

As a result of the survey and study findings, the City of Seattle adopted a community-based crime prevention strategy. This strategy employed four principal crime control tactics that were to address the problems identified by the LJPO study. These four tactics involve:

- a residential security inspection service that encourages residents to protect their homes against easy entry by burglars;
- property marking to deter theft and assist in the recovery of stolen goods;
- crime prevention education provided to residents through seminars and complimentary information packets; and
- neighborhood blockwatch groups, usually consisting of 10-15 families who exchange information about their schedules and habits, watch one

another's home and report suspicious activities to one another and the police.

The Seattle program is interesting not only for its variety of programming, but also for the extensiveness of its program evaluation process. Surveys of residents before and after the program's outset revealed that:

- the Seattle program helped to achieve a 48-61 percent reduction in burglaries among households using crime prevention techniques;
- the decrease in burglaries among participating program households did not displace crime to non-participating neighbors;
- crime reporting rates for both program participants and nonparticipants increased from 51 percent to 76 percent of burglaries committed, and burglary-in-progress calls to police increased by 27 percent; and
- of residents responding to the survey, 39 percent indicated they had acted upon the security recommendations of program staff.

Seattle's is a low-cost program: the principal expense is for personnel; there is no need for expensive equipment or other costly physical overhead. This makes it easy to adapt the program from neighborhood to neighborhood as needed. Seattle has obtained a high degree of citizen involvement in its community crime prevention program, and observers have suggested that the mutual concern residents experience in the crime preventative efforts is energizing other neighborhood projects as well. (12)

JCP&L Corporate Crime Prevention Program: A Business Example

The Jersey Central Power and Light Company (JCP&L) covers 236 municipalities in 13 counties and has employees on the road and in the air working on utility lines at all hours. Corporate directors recognized that the company was well suited to implementing a crime prevention program. The objectives of the program they developed were not only to train employees in crime prevention techniques so that neighborhoods might be safer, but also to build a spirit of cooperation among employees that might prove beneficial to the company as well. Using crime prevention as the catalyst, JCP&L initiated a series of internal changes that its executives hoped would increase communication among workers and supervisors, improve morale, and provide greater security to both the corporation and neighborhoods. (13)

JCP&L employees spend much of their time in the field and have immediate radio access to a central dispatcher. Employees are trained to look out for suspicious activity and report it. Field workers receive report cards which they fill-in when they observe a crime. They also radio the information to the JCP&L dispatcher, who notifies police via the "911" emergency telephone hotline. After reporting the crime, employees may either tear up the report card and remain anonymous or sign the card and submit it for company acknowledgement. Company officials point out that within two weeks of the program's implementation, a JCP&L lineman witnessed a homicide and provided information that resulted in the murderer's apprehension and conviction. (14)

JCP&L has not developed programming specifically geared to the elderly, but company executives have indicated that this is an area of growing concern. JCP&L program planners have determined that a general crime prevention strategy is best suited to their objectives. It has been suggested, however, that since employees are highly visible they may have a fear-reducing effect upon the elderly, who are aware of their crime prevention role.

The New Mexico Crime Stoppers Program: Using Television

The centerpiece of the Albuquerque Crime Stoppers effort is a "Crime of the Week" television program. Each week, the program's police coordinator picks an unsolved crime and designates it "crime of the week." Local actors and senior volunteers reenact the crime on local television; cash rewards are offered to viewers who provide leads that result in convictions. Citizens, promised anonymity, are urged to call Crime Stoppers if they have information about the feature crime or any other unsolved felony crime. Once the case is cleared, informants receive the cash rewards, which vary in amount and are set by the program's board of directors. The reward fund consists of donations from local businesses, individuals and civic groups. Obtaining funds has not been a problem. (15)

Use of the media has been important in raising public awareness and assisting in the solution of local crimes. A single tip to Crime Stoppers can have phenomenal results: In Albuquerque, a tip smashed an interstate auto theft ring and led to the recovery of 45 stolen cars valued at $250,000. A seemingly innocuous tip from a concerned parent resulted in the largest seizure of angel dust (PCP) in New Mexico history, and another helped solve a three-year-old homicide case. Since Crime Stoppers began in 1976, it has been adopted in over 100 U.S. cities including Houston, Cincinnati, Minneapolis, and Phoenix. (16)

Some State and Local Efforts

Three states--California, Rhode Island and New York--have significant programs to stimulate and support community crime prevention efforts. These programs differ in the manner by which they disburse funds:

- In California, funds are distributed only to law enforcement agencies, and only when those agencies document an increasing local crime problem. (17) Crime prevention projects may receive annual grants of up to $125,000 for a period of two years. To qualify for state funding, an applicant must:

  . contribute 10 percent of the total program budget during the first year and 20 percent thereafter;

  . use volunteers or paraprofessionals; and

  . show a commitment to continue the program with local funds after expiration of the grant period.

  Since 1980, California's program has funded over 40 community crime resistance efforts.

- Rhode Island is in its second year of state-sponsored community crime prevention. Its law (the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Act, P.L. of R.I., 1985, Chapter 383) was closely modeled on New York's legislation, but Rhode Island has adapted it. The Governor's Criminal Justice Commission refers to a preexisting local aid formula to allocate the $100,000 annual program budget among applicants, which include neighborhood groups, police departments and local governments. In the first year, awards went to applicants in 27 of the state's 39 towns and cities. The City of Providence used its award, in turn, to fund five programs. Grants to localities ranged from $400 to $12,000. While many of the funded programs do somehow attend to senior citizens' problems, only one program deals exclusively with their crime prevention needs. (18)

New York's program, more than Rhode Island's and far more than California's, emphasizes local community initiative. Although cooperation and coordination with police are required, the Neighborhood Preservation Crime Prevention Act (NPCPA) (Chapter 55, Laws of 1983) authorizes the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) to award funds directly to community organizations pursuing crime prevention activities. The police role usually consists of providing support services, statistical data and a check against vigilantism; also, DCJS may contact the police at various points in the application and grant process to ensure that organizations are performing their contracted function in an approved fashion.

The median award since 1983 has varied from about $12,000 to $17,000, and the number of applications has ranged from 248 to 363. The percentage of applications approved has increased markedly from the first years of the program as initially successful applicants reapplied for the subsequent years' funding for which they are eligible (see table 6).

Contracts are for one year, but are renewable up to a maximum of four years at the Commissioner's discretion. A local program receiving NPCPA payments may not accept any other state funds for activities to be performed under the contract. While this provision has made some existing organizations ineligible for funding, it has encouraged the rise of many community-based organizations.

Police departments have largely supported community crime prevention initiatives, and when the NPCPA legislation was proposed in 1983, law enforcement agencies from across the state supported its passage. The New York City Police Department, the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association and the Correctional Association of New York are just a few of the organizations that registered their approval of the legislation.

Crime Prevention Under NPCPA

The NPCPA program is community-based. Other than requirements of basic reporting and accounting, local organizations have autonomy in implementing and directing programming. The intention is that this independence from central direction, both state and local, enables neighborhood organizations to be more responsive to the specific needs of neighborhood residents.

Table 6
NPCPA Funding

	Applications	Approved	Funds Available	Median Award
1983	306	57	$1.0 mil.	$17,000
1984	363	120	2.0 mil.	16,632
1985	265	138	2.0 mil.	12,200
1986	248	145	2.5 mil.	16,000

Source: NYS DCJS, Office of Crime Prevention

One participant in the 1986 New York State Governor's Conference on Crime Prevention noted that "crime prevention is more than patrol, it is people helping people and forming the bonds that will reclaim our cities." (19) Most of the projects funded through the NPCPA, understandably and appropriately, emphasize activities that meet criminal behavior "head on": neighborhood watches, target hardening and safety education are common. But some projects do contain activities intended generally to reduce isolation, especially isolation among older or infirm people; through escort services, volunteer visiting, and meal deliveries, such projects renew people's connections with others in their places of residence. And a few projects explicitly attempt to develop organizations that will be multi-purpose organs of neighborhood energy.

So while most projects may grow out of existing organizations, some projects actually catalyze the development of similar organizations that increase the strength of an area's informal crime preventative character. We wish, in this review, to highlight those programs that seek to establish bonds among neighborhood residents as well as to formally police the streets. However, we certainly do not by that emphasis mean to imply that the more traditional programs are ineffective or even necessarily less effective.

A Senate Research Service review of 125 of the NPCPA projects funded in 1985 identified the great variety of crime prevention efforts being pursued by community organizations in New York State. Ninety-three projects--almost 75 percent--included some provision for neighborhood watch. Eighty-two of these projects involved neighborhood watch in conjunction with other crime prevention activities. The wide variety of these additional activities is indicated in table 7. DCJS notes that 35 percent of the projects funded between 1983 and 1985 had services specifically for seniors. (20).

Table 8 shows a tabulation of activities by the number of projects (regardless of presence or absence of neighborhood watch) using them. The category of education itself is various, involving different combinations of newsletters, speakers, video presentations, workshops and other media (see table 9).

Some of the categories indicate that under NPCPA, crime prevention in New York has come to include activities that are not strictly police-like. Telephone reassurance, escort services, volunteer visitors and some kinds of educational activities, while responsive to specific crime fears, have at least the potential to be generally integrative. Noted also were some efforts to

Table 7
Activities Additional to Neighborhood Watch

Activity	Number of Programs
Education	64
Target Hardening	34
Escort	23
Property Marketing	22
Youth Activities	20
Telephone Reassurance	5
Volunteer Visitors	3
Postal Alert	1

Table 8
Sample of NPCPA-Funded Activities

Activity	Number of Groups
Education	96
Neighborhood Watch	93
Target Hardening	42
Youth Activities	35
Escort	25
Property Marking	18
Workshops	14
Telephone Reassurance	7
Safehouses	6
Volunteer Visitors	4
Transportation	3
Postal Alert	1

Table 9
Sample of NPCPA-Funded Educational Activities

Activity	Number of Groups
Newsletter	41
Speakers	33
Videos	18
Workshops	14
Publications/Handouts	12
Informational Clearinghouse	7
General	4

establish block clubs, which usually are general purpose neighborhood organizations. Examples of such community-building efforts will be described later in this chapter. (21)

Supporting the Police

Bayville Auxiliary Police--The Bayville Auxiliary Police, sponsored by the Village of Bayville (Nassau County), secured DCJS funding in 1983. The program combines blockwatch and neighborhood watch patrols with target hardening and community outreach to, in the words of the project director, "meet the crime problem with a total community approach." The Village of Bayville has been supportive of the program and has helped to fund and organize a teen center, senior bus and cooperative police/community activities.

Bayville has tried to fight crime by encouraging a community effort involving schools, local civic organizations and scores of volunteers. Since 1983, when the project first received funding under NPCPA, a network of 250 volunteers has been established and is involved in blockwatch and neighborhood patrols. Regular neighborhood meetings with police are scheduled and are well attended by local residents. These meetings offer a forum for airing grievances as well as provide an opportunity for police representatives to give instruction in crime prevention. This instruction has had some effect: Shortly after the program began, an attempted child kidnapping was stopped by two local teens who were trained neighborhood watch volunteers.

The Bayville program has concentrated on two groups, youths and seniors, that may suffer more than other segments of the population from criminal victimization. An anti-crime youth program called "Bayville's Crimebusters" provides weekend activities for young people at the local teen center, and there is a street hockey league. A Stop Vandalism Campaign initiated by local police youth division officers has tried to get young people involved in the community and to feel some responsibility for its security and upkeep. For senior citizens, police provide self-protection training. Volunteers visit the homes of seniors and perform a security check of door and window locks. Security hardware is provided and installed if needed, and informational booklets are also available. Senior meetings occur frequently, and elders are encouraged to become part of the crime control effort. Escorts and a senior bus are available to those who need transportation to medical offices, banks and shopping centers. Whistles are given to seniors as part of a street security program.

Bayville is noteworthy not only for the variety of crime prevention activities it pursues but also for the community effort that has grown behind its programming. All residents, regardless of age, have the opportunity to participate. Recently, all village employees were trained as part of a crime spotting program. Now, those employees, who are on the streets during the day (while a large proportion of residents are at work), are part of the community crime prevention effort. (22)

PAC-TAC (Police and Citizens Together Against Crime) of Rochester seeks to involve the public in the responsibility of neighborhood security, including patrolling. Through a variety of means, PAC-TAC:

- provides contact between police and the community;
- encourages crime prevention activities among local residents; and
- increases police understanding of neighborhood needs.

PAC-TAC was organized in 1972 after Rochester police officials received funding from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) to pursue community crime prevention goals via neighborhood watch. PAC-TAC originally was a budget-saving measure, and with its success in using civilian volunteers for patrols, it won wide acceptance from both the police and the community. When LEAA terminated funding in the early 1980's, Rochester crime prevention officers applied for and received DCJS funding through an umbrella organization, Rochester Jobs Inc. Under the NPCPA, the program gathered new energy and attracted larger numbers of citizens. (23)

PAC-TAC volunteers are trained to be eyes and ears for the police as well as a public relations arm. "The most important thing," the project coordinator relates, "is to get people, and especially the elderly, out of their homes." PAC-TAC patrollers walk 23 beats every night. Each evening, 12-to-14 people participate; each patroller is equipped with a radio unit set to an emergency channel monitored by police headquarters. In addition, one person in each group of three patrollers carries a radio that is tuned to the police broadcast channel, the same frequency on which the police car radios operate. It is estimated that a police car is on its way within thirty seconds after a group's leader calls for assistance. PAC-TAC patrols have priority status over all other police calls.

As part of the new effort, police officers previously given automobiles were assigned foot patrols. Although the police officers affected by this shift

expressed both skepticism and hostility toward the new concept in its initial stages, most became convinced of its feasibility after spending only a short time on the streets.

Some officers who feared that citizens might try to assume the police role now support the program because it allows for personal contact between the police and the public. Rochester police administrators have acknowledged this objective from the start.

Community response has been extremely positive--Pac-Tac has attracted more than 750 volunteers. Seniors have taken special interest in the project and now constitute about 30 percent of the volunteers. (24) The ages of patrollers range from 18 to 92. The project coordinator reports that when PAC-TAC patrollers are on the street, seniors come out of their homes and greet the patrollers with coffee and baked goods. PAC-TAC members are trained to put community relations work on an equal footing with their patrol responsibilities, and it is reported that since the new program was implemented in 1983, crime has dropped by eight percent, and that since PAC-TAC initiated a bank patrol on check cashing days, there has not been a single purse snatching outside any of the banks. (25)

Project Outreach of Plainview (Nassau County) pursues a variety of crime prevention activities with an emphasis upon those that might build a sense of community. Project Outreach was designed by the Old Bethpage Central School District to counter an "absence of a strong community identity in Plainview-Old Bethpage." (26) Project planners observed that the weak sense of community identity "caused feelings of frustration, anger, isolation and helplessness" among residents faced with a serious crime problem. Project Outreach uses neighborhood watch patrols, community awareness programs and target hardening seminars; the goal is to encourage the development of community identity by involving residents in local affairs either as members of the crime prevention organization or as participants in project-sponsored events. Over 500 people attended a Discovery Day conference designed to provide information about the community to residents. A Celebration Day street festival attracted an estimated 3,500 people. The project director noted: "Both events were widely hailed for enhancing the sense and spirit of community. . . . In the end, people who feel close to their community feel close to their neighbors and are more willing to look out for one another." (27)

Since its creation in 1983, Project Outreach has created a network of six neighborhood watch organizations and enlisted the efforts of hundreds of local residents. Neighborhood watch meetings have attracted nearly 1,000

residents, and a crime prevention newsletter helps to coordinate programming and keep the community informed of the organization's activities. Recently, an Operation ID program was added to the list of crime prevention activities available to the community through Project Outreach.

Some indication of the project's impact on the community can be found in statistics compiled by the Plainview Village Police Department. Since the project began in 1984, burglary and vandalism, two crimes that especially troubled the community, declined significantly: Just one year after implementation, residential burglaries fell 18 percent and criminal mischief misdemeanors (including vandalism) declined by 16 percent. (28)

Project Outreach received a Presidential citation for community development from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1984.

Outreach

The Community Safety and Security Program of Lackawanna may appear to be a conventional patrol, but it also provides community outreach services to the elderly. Administered by the Friendship House of Lackawanna, this project combines neighborhood watch and target hardening with a senior reassurance program. The reassurance program, designed especially for isolated and fearful seniors, involves volunteers from the neighborhood watch group telephoning elderly residents in the morning and early evening. The volunteer callers talk with the elderly and try to establish informal social networks within the neighborhood. The callers try to encourage the elderly they contact to become involved in a senior rehabilitation program which is also managed by Friendship House. This program also offers a range of activities, including craft classes and escorted local shopping trips. Program leaders indicate that the shopping trips have helped them to obtain local business sponsorship. In the telephone effort, the elderly are encouraged not only to participate as subscribers, but also to join the program as volunteer callers. Lists of referrals are provided and callers are trained in methods of making contact. Up to 250 Lackawanna seniors have enrolled in the program. (29)

S.T.O.P. Crime Program (Seniors Trigger an Ounce of Prevention) began receiving DCJS funding in 1983. Sponsored by the Whitesboro Hot Meals Council, the program combines a nutritional program for the homebound elderly with crime prevention instruction.

Each day, volunteers prepare 300 hot meals for local delivery. While in the homes disbursing the meals, volunteers check on the elderly residents,

visit for a few minutes and pass along information about local crime prevention activities. If residents are interested, volunteers will schedule security checks and property-marking visits and provide information about S.T.O.P.'s telephone reassurance program (a project in which S.T.O.P. volunteers create a telephone chain among residents). Other volunteers (many of whom are seniors), known as "Security Pals," visit with the homebound elderly for more extended periods each day. Such contact provides meaningful activity for volunteer and resident alike. (30)

Program volunteers not only try to integrate seniors into the community, but directly provide a network of support. One objective is to inform elderly residents about crime and make them cautious, but not afraid. Volunteers try to reassure and educate elderly residents as well as serve an intermediary function, matching seniors' needs with the proper social service offices.

Local police and civic organizations have provided both financial and staff support to the program. Police officers have directed crime prevention seminars for seniors, and civic groups have served as natural centers for recruitment of volunteers. It is important to emphasize that S.T.O.P. efforts go far beyond the usual crime prevention programs offered by law enforcement and community organizations. S.T.O.P. offers an integrative program that combines meals on wheels, friendly visiting, security checks, education and telephone reassurance to meet far more than the simple target-hardening needs of the elderly. (31)

Village Visiting Neighbors--(VVN) and its allied visiting neighbor programs in New York City send volunteers as young as 15 and as old as 89 to call on homebound elderly once a week. While not considered by many to be an anti-crime program, VVN is funded by NPCPA and helps to reduce fear among the elderly. VVN volunteers provide a network of support to the elderly, escort them on necessary local errands and instruct them in practical crime prevention strategies. Without VVN, many elderly would remain isolated within their homes. Homebound elders are encouraged to become active members of the community, and the infirm are provided with special assistance. VVN directly addresses the isolation that often breeds fear and tries to combat with caring the loneliness and feelings of helplessness experienced by many seniors. (32)

Broad-Based Organizing

The East New York Crime and Fear Prevention Program of Brooklyn serves as an umbrella organization for the wide variety of crime prevention activities being pursued by local crime watch associations in the Brooklyn community. The project is administered by the Local Development Corporation of East New York and combines neighborhood watch and informational programming with integrative, community-building activities. These community-building activities are chiefly concerned with the formation of block clubs in areas previously lacking any sense of community identity. (33)

The area covered by the East New York program has exhibited some of the City's higher robbery rates. The program has sought to lower these rates by assisting local block associations in planning their crime prevention programs. In neighborhoods where such associations do not exist, the organization has tried to identify community activists and create block groups.

The project director judges that the block club concept has worked well--the East New York program has sparked the formation of more than 60 block associations. Most--80-to-90 percent--of these associations have implemented crime prevention efforts featuring watch patrols, property-marking and escort. Other activities include an after-school program for youths, a drug sales reporting program and special, adult-oriented events such as bus trips, crime prevention seminars and meetings with elected officials and police administrators.

Watch patrols are the centerpiece of the program. Trained volunteers who meet standards set by the New York City Police Department are issued identification cards, caps, and distinctive shirts. Volunteer teams of two or more are given walkie-talkies. The patrollers work four-hour shifts and report any suspicious activity they observe to the Local Development Corporation (LDC) base station. The station operator, who is a paid LDC employee, then notifies the police via the "911" emergency hotline. If it's practicable, the volunteers remain at the crime scene until police arrive and then fill out an incident report that remains on file in the LDC office. Patrol volunteers are instructed not to intervene or involve themselves in any confrontational situations.

Seniors are not a major focus of the program. A study by Fordham University found that the elderly comprised less than three percent of the population in the target area. (These seniors tend to be the most active members of the crime prevention groups.) Volunteers, however, provide a senior security

escort service as well as patrol train stations, banks and other areas perceived by the elderly to be dangerous, and the project director suggests that the presence of these volunteers has helped to reduce fear and enhanced the mobility of local seniors.

Since its inception, the main problem the program has faced is public apathy--organizers suggest that the residents of the neighborhood are skeptical, even cynical, about the efficacy of public or quasi-public programs in general.

Project S.A.F.E. (Securing A Family Environment), sponsored by the North East Block Club Alliance, Inc., of Rochester, is a comprehensive crime prevention program that consists of about 60 volunteers and includes the establishment of new block clubs. Since the project began in 1984 under NPCPA, about twelve block clubs have been established in a small area of Rochester. (34)

The block clubs have flourished better in areas where there are more homeowners and where other community organizations already existed. (This experience confirms a general finding: successful block clubs more often have formal relationships with other area organizations. (35))

Each block club creates its own crime prevention program, so each is able to tailor crime prevention tactics to specific local needs. Programs include street patrol, volunteer visitors and escort. Currently, none of the Alliance clubs are involved in crime prevention activities directed specifically toward seniors; the program provides benefits to all members of the community.

A new mobile patrol has enabled neighborhood watch patrols to extend their coverage into high crime areas which patrollers had been reluctant to enter on foot. The mobile patrol vehicle is equipped with a police radio and can accommodate up to six volunteers. This patrol was proposed and initiated by one of the block clubs. Other Alliance clubs have adopted special community projects such as paving streets and sidewalks, lighting streets, and sponsoring fairs and festivals.

Controlling Crime, Reducing Isolation

While there is variety in local community crime prevention efforts, it does seem that the more direct methods are the more numerous: patrolling and target hardening are clearly and solely about crime. Telephone reassurance and the formation of block clubs, on the other hand, are not as clearly and solely

oriented toward crime problems, and they obviously are amenable to other purposes.

Patrolling and target hardening are intended primarily to reduce incidence of crime; it is presumed that fear will decline as people observe these deterrents. The less direct community crime prevention efforts treat fear differently: they treat the reduction of fear, as well as the reduction of the incidence of crime, not as a matter of individuals sizing up the situation and deciding things are safer, but as a matter of mutually involved people talking with one another and reassuring one another, in both open and subtle ways, that they look out for one another.

Surely the most direct approaches are more emphatic statements that someone is doing something about street crime. For many people--those many who have daily, active connections with family and neighbors--such statements are all that is needed. But for those who are not so well affiliated, among whom we must include many senior citizens, patrolling and target hardening may raise fears as well as quell them. For the well affiliated, patrolling and target hardening are more evidence of the strong social bond--the community--which supports each of them. For isolated people, patrolling and target hardening may be welcome measures of protection. But in observing the fact of their isolation, they are only being sensible if they conclude that they are not likely beneficiaries of the informal, more constant mutual helping that neighbors can give one another.

Programs of patrolling and target hardening, on the one hand, and friendly visiting and the organization of block clubs, on the other hand, should not be thought of as alternatives to each other as community crime prevention efforts; both are useful--in fact, both are needed in many neighborhoods. In some places, general purpose organizations pre-existed, and the direct crime prevention activities developed out of and were enhanced by a continuing community awareness. But in other places, the desire to organize against crime has actually catalyzed not only patrols and target hardening, but also efforts to create community awareness and general purpose organizations. Such efforts, at their best, could reassuringly reach into isolated seniors' and others' homes and not only let them know that others share their concern with crime, but also draw them into meaningful involvement. More comprehensive community crime prevention is only one of the benefits when such efforts are successful, for vulnerability to crime is only one of the ways by which isolation damages individuals and communities.

CHAPTER 4
CRIME AWAKENING COMMUNITY

Among the findings of this inquiry so far, several perhaps are mundane and frustrating, but nevertheless are fundamental.

The problem of crime against senior citizens is both real and serious. If victimization statistics indicate otherwise, it is because they do not account for the self-confinement that can reduce exposure, but that in itself constitutes criminal victimization. Further, hiatuses in press reports of spectacular cases of assault on senior citizens probably indicate far more about news selection and selling newspapers than they do about the ongoing, daily conditions of life for urban senior citizens; most victimization is not spectacular.

The problem is complex, in great part because of the compounding effect of fear. It is only sensible to react to jeopardy with fear and self-protective behaviors. But if self-protection involves mainly bigger locks and more confined living, it brings isolation. Isolation, an unfortunate correlate of aging even without the influence of crime, means that people are probably not obtaining the reassurance of reasonable order which may be possible or may even already exist in their communities; isolation removes them from the collection of neighbors whose mutual watchfulness actually reduces the likelihood of crime.

Any remedy for such a complex problem is likely to also be complex; we ought not expect to find a panacea. The challenge is both to make life safer and to reduce fear. Declines in fear will not simply follow declines in incidence, especially if making life safer means locks and mace more than it means community ties.

More policing and more community each can reduce both incidence and fear. In most places, the presence of a police officer is the most authoritative sign that those around us are actively interested in keeping order. That sign is crime reductive--we might reasonably expect that most street criminals would decline to act in the presence of a police officer. But such deterrence occurs

also through the formal, visible efforts of neighborhood watch groups and the informal watchfulness that people who care about their neighborhood give to one another. (Recall the finding in a study of burglars that "the majority . . . said that merely being noticed by a neighbor was enough to deter them. All of them indicated that they would leave the area if challenged by a neighbor." (1) Also, "the characteristic offenders looked for most in their victims was being alone." (2))

The authoritative presence of a police officer, of course, is reassuring--it makes us feel safer. But police officers are relatively few, and the reassurance we may obtain through the formal and informal efforts of our neighbors can be more constant. Cities may fairly distribute police officers across their areas, regardless of the amount of community each area possesses. But in places where the residents do not interact and do not organize, at best for general neighborhood improvement purposes as well as for crime prevention, the residents obtain only that amount of deterrence and reassurance which often overworked police forces can provide.

The Current Response: Varied, But Not Coordinated

In observing current activities to counter crime against seniors, one might reasonably conclude that government's response is appropriately variegated for such a complex problem. If we see the problem as a syndrome of the incidence of crime, the relative frailty frequently observed among seniors and the isolation exhibited by many of our neighborhoods, we can also see matching responses: the police fight crime, the State Office for the Aging (SOFA) attempts to address a broad range of difficulties experienced by seniors, and the NPCPA fosters local responses to local crime. But these responses occur largely independent of one another; the administration of the government response to crime against the elderly does not indicate recognition that the separate elements do indeed constitute a syndrome. Variegated response without coordination is fragmentation, and fragmentation at least makes for inefficiency. It also suggests that the interrelatedness of isolation and incidence of crime is not sufficiently appreciated.

The lack of recognition of this syndrome in the structure of administration is the more frustrating because it's obvious that professionals at both

the State and local levels do recognize it. Local police departments not only have the primary official responsibility for keeping order, but have explicit community relations programs. At the State level, the NPCPA enables local efforts (reviewed in chapter 3) which appear mostly to be of a policing nature, but which can involve basic community organizing. Some NPCPA efforts have activities to deal specifically with crime against senior citizens. The Crime Victims Board, too, provides some assistance for the development of neighborhood watches. (3)

Most pointedly oriented toward senior citizens are the programs of the State Office for the Aging (SOFA) and the Aging Services Network it uses to execute those programs. SOFA is the major funding source and supervisor for 59 Area Agencies on Aging. Most of these agencies are organs of county government. (New York City, comprising five counties, has a single agency. The agencies in a few counties and Indian lands are independent not-for-profit organizations.) SOFA conveys monies available from the federal Older Americans Act and the State Community Services for the Elderly Program to the agencies, and the agencies mostly contract with local providers for a variety of services, including:

- access services--counseling, information, referral, escort and transportation;
- in-home services--homemakers, home health aides, friendly visiting, telephone reassurance and chore maintenance;
- legal services;
- congregate and home delivered meals;
- adult day care; and
- recreation.

All such services are easily seen as treatments of symptoms of isolation. Among state agencies, in fact, SOFA may be the only one in which isolation is regarded openly and explicitly as a problem; this is sensible inasmuch as SOFA's primary and distinctive mission is to serve a segment of New Yorkers among whom isolation is a frequent characteristic.

SOFA has given attention specifically to the problem of crime against seniors. SOFA has trained police officers to heighten their awareness of seniors' security problems, and it has sponsored (in collaboration with local police, DCJS and the Crime Victims Board) efforts promoting self-protection, lock installa-

tion and victim assistance and counseling. But while SOFA engages in some specifically crime preventative efforts, it offers also the clearest indication that people in government recognize the role isolation plays in seniors' crime problems. Stating that a "goal is to reduce the elderly individual's social isolation, in an effort to reduce their risk of victimization," SOFA observes of its transportation, legal services, nutrition and information programs that:

> Although not called 'crime prevention' or 'victim assistance', all of these programs serve to reduce criminal victimization and vulnerability of the elderly. However, just as important, they all serve the essential and continual function of reducing social isolation. (4)

But this sensitivity to the true nature of the problem of crime against seniors exists only within agencies; little or nothing suggests that the State and the localities have asked themselves whether their efforts to deal with crime and their efforts to deal with isolation could profitably conjoin. So the NPCPA groups extend the policing function, but only the exemplary few attend to the neighborhood conditions that make more policing necessary. And SOFA's area aging offices combat isolation, but they do so more in ministerial ways rather than through the integration that occurs when local residents become involved in local organizations and local life.

Some Limits and Possibilities

Questions of Strategy and Realism

There is bound to be disagreement on what state or local government should do in this matter. Real-world fiscal limits mean that governments cannot station police officers at every corner, and legislation cannot create real community. Much of the anonymity of urban residence comes from transience, and transience--of businesses, of residents, of the very nature of entire neighborhoods--is a hallmark of the urban place.

But as we have seen, government does try, and it does so despite the fact that two elemental and somewhat interrelated sets of questions seem not yet to have been clearly answered.

- Attention to Predators, Attention to Conditions--In fighting crime--crime in general and crime against senior citizens specifically--what

proportion of our efforts should we focus narrowly on criminal activity, and what proportion should we focus more on ameliorating the background conditions that permit crime? In a world of finite public resources, how much should we spend on formal watchfulness and how much on activities, such as organizing block clubs, which build community bonds, reduce fear and thereby also increase the informal watchfulness available within a community?

- Feasibility--What is it possible and appropriate for government to do? Formal police operations, presumably, are unanimously regarded as appropriate. And the existence of the NPCPA indicates that a majority regards quasi-police operations such as neighborhood watch to be an appropriate point of government activity. But what about trying to induce community spirit and organization in an underorganized neighborhood occupied by frequent transients and people who own none of the property? Is that realistic? Is it appropriate, given that the feeling of community is ultimately and inescapably a personal and informal matter?

There can be no clear answers--answers that unambiguously guide policy--to such questions. And whatever answers we derive depend implicitly on answers to other questions: What is it that constitutes victimization sufficient to warrant government action? Should our concern be the cases that make tabloid headlines--the single, elderly women who almost never leave their apartments and are so isolated that they don't even report the repeated burglaries they suffer? Should it be all those who ever suffer a mugging and to whom we offer counseling and compensation through the Crime Victims Board? Or should it include all those who have avoided muggings and burglaries, but who have done so by installing locks on doors and windows, carefully circumscribing their comings and goings to daylight and certain parts of the neighborhood, and constantly being wary?

No one would argue that we should choose a mode of crime reduction that seriously damages older people's quality of life, just as no one would argue that fearful people should be encouraged to be less fearful before actual conditions have become less dangerous. But between the absurd poles of, on one hand, an extreme target-hardening approach and, on the other hand, suggesting that people live fuller lives even if that is reckless, are possibilities sufficiently various to make choice difficult.

Organizing for Community, Organizing for Safety

Consider the problem of underorganized neighborhoods, and recall that neighborhood organizations constitute an "opportunity structure," vehicles through which neighborhood residents collect and focus their energies. (5) Some observers think that the existence of such an opportunity structure is an impor-

tant prerequisite for community crime control efforts; "most people do not participate in collective responses to crime [but] for persons involved in neighborhood organizations, there is a relatively high probability that they will participate in collective responses to crime." (6)

In Sweden, the very fact of underorganization has been regarded as a problem in itself, and the Swedes have developed "neighborhood work"--a variant of social work--to try to deal with it:

> Neighborhood work is specifically intended to facilitate the development of personal networks among residents of a neighborhood. . . . to reduce reliance on professionals for the solution of problems and to stimulate a sense of mutual personal responsibility among community residents. . . . to create a sense of unity among the residents. . . . (7)

In a neighborhood work project, a small staff of social workers is stationed in an underorganized area; the workers try to persuade the residents to create an association and, through it, to develop activities that bring residents together, i.e., to create a true neighborhood. The activities can include educational and recreational programs for youth, social clubs for adults, events such as craft fairs, creation and circulation of a newspaper, and projects to improve the area's buildings and landscape. (8)

In contrast, NPCPA-funded efforts depend on the ready existence of neighborhood organizations--the law requires that to be eligible, groups must have been in existence for at least one year. The law does state that "company activities should also seek to develop and strengthen a sense of neighborhood identity and a constructive attitude in that neighborhood," but the list of permissible activities is dominated by such specifications as "street-foot patrols," "escort services," and "dispersal of crime prevention literature and equipment." The contrast with "neighborhood work," then, is not only in that organizations must already exist, but also in the nature of typical activities. Applicants know that DCJS must judge the likely crime preventative effectiveness of their proposed efforts, and so they have understandably emphasized efforts that are explicitly and immediately crime preventative (e.g., neighborhood watch, target hardening, literature on self-protection).

But as we have noted, there are exceptions; several NPCPA-funded groups perform both explicitly crime preventative activities and activities meant to heighten neighborhood identity. For instance:

- Several groups have telephone reassurance efforts that no doubt involve more than conveying information about crime prevention.

- The S.T.O.P. Crime Program adds crime prevention activities to the ongoing Whitesboro Hot Meals project.

- The focuses of some NPCPA-funded groups are almost as broad as that of "neighborhood work," but within the specific context of intentions that their activities have a crime preventative effect. For instance, the East New York Crime and Fear Prevention Program and Project S.A.F.E. (Rochester) perform both typical crime prevention activities and basic organizing--the formation of block clubs.

To Broaden Scope Without Reducing Accountability and Effectiveness

Such groups suggest a combination which may be both instructive and effective. Their performance of both explicitly crime preventative activities and basic community organizing reflects the view that a high degree of community always improves the participation in and effectiveness of the explicitly crime preventative activities; further, it reflects the view that each approach, in itself, is in some places too limited to bring about safer neighborhoods. The combination reflects the view that the immediacy and urgency of jeopardy in some neighborhoods demands pointed attention--formal and quasi-formal policing, target hardening and dissemination of literature on self-protection--but that the complicating factor of fear requires that such activities must be supplemented with more basically integrative activities.

At present, this combination exists mainly in the minds and activities of a few local organizers, a few police officers and a few State officers. Notwithstanding SOFA's relatively quiet recognition of the anti-crime value of its efforts, the combination is not part of explicit State policy and administration. There appears to be no formal effort or body that brings together the resources and insights of groups involved in crime prevention and those involved in reducing isolation, especially isolation among seniors. As a result, we miss some opportunities to improve community crime prevention through community building and to spur community building with the concern that crime raises.

One Possible Means of Combination

The examples of broad-scoped activity by some of the NPCPA groups suggest that NPCPA groups present an opportunity for the needed synthesis. But

it would be too simple to suggest that DCJS should weight its funding approvals and disapprovals heavily with consideration of whether or not an applicant is engaging in basic community organizing. DCJS must judge whether an applicant's proposed activities will be crime preventative, and as it dispenses public monies, the agency ought to continue to hold applicants to a reasonable standard of demonstrability in assessing the crime preventative potential of the activities it funds. The sight of patrollers on streets seems per se to demonstrate better the phenomenon of crime prevention than does the creation of a neighborhood organization that holds meetings, organizes craft fairs and publishes a newspaper.

This is not to say that basic organizing is not crime preventative; it is simply not as demonstrably crime preventative, and this makes it harder to distinguish which community organizing effort merits funding and which does not. While the NPCPA funding available to applicants such as Project S.A.F.E. and the East New York Crime and Fear Prevention Program indicates DCJS's awareness of the importance of basic organizing, those groups also engage in explicitly crime preventative activity; it would be reckless with public monies to expect DCJS to fund bridge clubs because their sponsors claim that it helps the participants to get to know one another and, perhaps, keeps them inside and safe from street predators.

So, for DCJS to give great weight to subtler means of reducing crime, and less therefore to more direct ways such as neighborhood watch, might constitute a dilution of commitment to its particular mandate: to fight crime.

In New York State and probably across the nation, "neighborhood work" may be too vague an idea to warrant government programming. The danger in the neighborhood work model is that many funded efforts would be too diffuse to have any demonstrable effect. The NPCPA, on the other hand, is evidence that crime prevention is specific, measurable and important enough for government programming. As a result of that determination, many organized community efforts exist and will come into existence. The danger of funding waste inherent in the neighborhood work idea is minimal inasmuch as the funding of an NPCPA group depends on the group's satisfaction of DCJS's specific requirements; the public monies given to these groups is for performance of explicitly crime preventative activities. But once a group has been funded--in effect, once it has passed the quality control standard in DCJS's funding process--we might reasonably ask if it could, without weakening its specifically crime preventative activities, also address the matter of basic organizing and integration.

Here, then, is one possibility: SOFA, after consultation with DCJS, could invite NPCPA-funded groups to consider some activities additional to the usual crime prevention efforts. These activities might include, for instance, periodic neighborhood surveys of senior citizens to ascertain their numbers, conditions, concerns and needs; daily telephone contact routines similar to efforts currently undertaken by SOFA contractors and some NPCPA groups; and creation of subgroups of senior citizens to concentrate specifically on outreach, integration and the crime concerns of their age peers.

The number of potential agents constituted by the NPCPA groups alone is attractive. Just as attractive, however, is that NPCPA groups are voluntary and indigenous to their communities; outreach and integration occurring through NPCPA groups would decidedly not be occurring through the efforts either of professionals or outsiders. In this way, the groups would be accomplishing one of the important ends of "neighborhood work": to reduce reliance on professionals for the solution of problems and to stimulate a sense of mutual personal responsibility among community residents. (9) It is true that in this scheme of things, explicit crime prevention would be a prerequisite, and neighborhood organizing a supplement. Quality-control, fiscal considerations make it sensible to treat the basic organizing as subsequential, but we nevertheless may still recognize it as necessary. The important thing is that it would be getting done.

A Statutory Note

A formal SOFA effort to contact, train and employ NPCPA-funded groups could have a practical obstacle. DCJS and the groups themselves might be averse to suggestions that would dilute their explicitly crime preventative efforts. Their participation would practically depend on their being persuaded that basic organizing is worthwhile and that they can do it without damaging the NPCPA funded activities. In this matter, especially, groups like Project S.A.F.E., the East New York Crime and Fear Prevention Program, and PAC-TAC might be good models.

Depending on the nature of a SOFA program to employ NPCPA groups, there could also be a legal obstacle. The NPCPA specifies that:

> No company receiving payments from any other funds of the state for activities performed by it under the contract shall receive or be eligible to receive payments pursuant to this article. To the extent other state funds are received in violation of this subdivision payments otherwise due under this article shall be accordingly reduced. (10)

If SOFA were to contract with NPCPA groups and convey funds to them, many of them would be in jeopardy of losing some NPCPA monies. This perhaps could be avoided by careful delineation of NPCPA duties and SOFA duties. It would be preferable--at least from a cost standpoint--if the groups could simply be persuaded that movement toward their crime prevention goals would be accelerated by working with SOFA-related efforts to reach senior citizens. Presumably, SOFA could offer training and consultation without jeopardizing NPCPA groups' funding. (Also, many NPCPA groups will soon have exhausted their eligibility--four years--for NPCPA funding.)

The NPCPA depends on volunteers. It is not at all clear whether or not adding SOFA-related activities would strain personnel or monetary resources. It is conceivable that NPCPA groups' overhead problems can be such that an increment of funding would be necessary for them to assume SOFA-related duties. If that is the case, the Legislature could amend the NPCPA, enacting a carefully drawn exception that permitted the groups to receive money from SOFA. Such funding would involve accountability oversight by SOFA (although SOFA, in any case, probably would wish to periodically study the effectiveness of its efforts through NPCPA groups) and criteria for conveying the funds (including not only a statement of proposed activities, but a profile of the size and nature of the senior citizen population in an applicant's area).

In all, it would be critical to preserve the great degree of local determination of the nature of the efforts. SOFA's chief role (especially in a non-funded program) would initially be to contact groups and discuss possibilities, and afterwards to offer technical assistance.

Recommendation: An Administrative Link

Our fundamental recommendation is that the State create an administrative link among its crime fighting, aging and community development agencies. We propose that those composing such a link:

- explore the possibilities for employing anti-crime concerns and organs to catalyze more effective actions to reduce isolation within neighborhoods, and among seniors particularly; and

- search generally and continuously for ways of reducing the extent to which neighborhoods exhibit the conditions that make it easy for the disorderly to create disorder.

We suggest that without investigating such possibilities, we may be missing opportunities to "get more mileage"--perhaps very significant mileage--out of the currently independent efforts that the State funds.

Pennsylvania's Initiative

This fundamental recommendation is hardly shocking; the operations of any state government are sufficiently broad to permit many instances of overlapping functions and possibly fruitful cooperation. For this particular kind of effort, Pennsylvania offers something of a precedent. In 1980, Pennsylvania Governor Thornburgh requested the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency to investigate a growing perception that the elderly were suffering inordinately from the incidence of crime. A research team appointed by the Commission's executive director was assigned four objectives: to research available data on the incidence of crime as it affects the elderly; to study data on the fear of crime and its consequences on the quality of life of Pennsylvania seniors; to review available strategies and services on a national and state level; and to formulate an effective program. The Commission's research team completed a report in late 1980. They found that:

- seniors constitute a major percentage of the total population of Pennsylvania;
- a significant number of the elderly live alone;
- elderly victimization rates are similar to national patterns, with the elderly the least victimized age group for most categories of crime;
- effects of crime are far more devastating for seniors than for any other age group; and
- a significant number of Pennsylvania's seniors limit activities due to fear of crime.

To better assess these findings, as well as to help coordinate governmental response, the Commission recommended the formation of an interagency Task Force on Elderly Crime Prevention. The Task Force, composed of representatives of 14 state agencies, would help marshal available resources toward crime preven-

tion objectives and develop a plan of action outlining programs that each agency should undertake in order to reduce seniors' crime risks.

The objective of the Task Force was not to see that every state agency developed a crime prevention program, but rather to minimize program duplication and enhance interagency and intergovernmental cooperation. Since the Task Force was organized in 1981, the State has initiated a wide variety of crime prevention programs directed toward the special needs of the elderly. These programs include the following:

- The Department of Aging has established a burglary prevention project in three Pennsylvania counties. The project provides door and window locks to seniors in need of increased security.

- The Commission on Crime and Delinquency provides crime prevention training to professionals in the criminal justice system and aging services network. More than 2,500 crime prevention officers have participated, and area agencies on aging throughout Pennsylvania now offer crime prevention information to their clients.

- The Department of Agriculture has used its network of regional offices to distribute crime prevention information to seniors living in the rural areas of the state.

- The Department of Community Affairs offers tax credits to induce in-kind donations from businesses located in "at-risk" areas and coordinates an interagency effort to make crime prevention part of the development of enterprise zones. (11)

Besides coordinating such agency efforts, the Task Force acts as the voice of the coalition. By reviewing agency policies and continuing to make recommendations on issues of concern to seniors, the Task Force plays an active role in creating a safer environment for Pennsylvania's seniors.

The Task Force has been assisted by its close relationship with the Department of Aging. The area agencies on aging (AAA) have acted as the vehicle for a number of crime prevention programs. For example, as a result of the Task Force program, every AAA in Pennsylvania has staff members who have completed the Elderly Crime Prevention Training Program. In addition to providing assistance to those who wish to reduce their chances of victimization, each AAA provides a wide range of client services for elderly crime victims. Such services include counseling, legal assistance, meals-on-wheels, day care and visiting nurses. (12)

Maintaining a Community Approach

Pennsylvania's example is more useful as a point of administrative structure than as a program. The particular activities engendered by the Task Force seem mostly to be within-agency variations of activities the agencies already conduct. One of the distinguishing resources New York State has developed is the NPCPA groups, and while we are not limiting our recommendation to matters pertaining to that resource, we are suggesting that the State explore the use of an arm of one agency--DCJS--for the purposes of, and perhaps even by another agency: SOFA.

The indigenous nature of NPCPA groups is one of their great attractions, and a second recommendation relates to it. We think the State should resist proposals to swing its anti-crime efforts back toward a more centralized model, such as California's (described in Chapter 3). The NPCPA is entirely too young a program for such a swing to be based on a thorough review of its successes and failures.

We are not unaware of the possible drawbacks to the State's commitment in the NPCPA program; the abstract risk and benefit of such a decentralized approach are apparent. The risk is that greater decentralization brings greater susceptibility to inefficient execution and even "ripoffs"; the benefit is leverage and inducement of local resources (especially human resources) into dealing with the problem with which a program is concerned.

A centralized method of conveying monies (for instance, through police departments only) carries a risk and benefit that mirror those of a decentralized method. Centralization provides the benefit of closer oversight and consequently fewer instances of the poor (and sometimes even dishonest) execution that sometimes occurs when you depend on nonprofessionals. But by failing to place the means of execution in community members' hands, centralization continues to ratify the flawed idea that all public problems are best dealt with only by government and professionals.

Whether the decentralized approach is the preferable one depends on the nature of the problem under consideration. In general, decentralization is more likely to be preferred when a problem derives mainly from local community characteristics, takes forms which differ from community to community, and requires solutions which differ from community to community. As chapters one and two suggest, crime against senior citizens and their fear of it seems to be such a problem.

This does not mean that program administrators should not continuously examine program activities in order to distinguish productive expenditures from unproductive expenditures. But decentralized programs--especially relatively new ones--offer much opportunity to auditors to find apparent misuse of the State's limited monies, and recommendations for tighter control almost invariably follow. While we should never scoff at the need for fiscal prudence, we should also recognize that the risk carried by decentralization may be more than balanced by the increment of local resources--especially nonmentary resources--which it can bring into play against the problem at issue. Tighter control, then, should not occur at the expense of overall program execution (to use a most worn cliche, such reforms can be classic cases of penny wisdom bringing pound foolishness).

Actions

Our recommendation for specific action conforms with those basic recommendations. The Legislature should direct SOFA, DCJS, the Department of State and the Crime Victims Board to consult, as a group, with one another in order to develop a plan for the creation and conduct of a body similar to Pennsylvania's Task Force, but with attention to New York State's particular crime fighting assets.

The Legislature's charge to the group could suggest that it primarily explore the potential benefits of cooperation with regard to current government sponsored activities, but the charge could specify that the group may also consider new ways of stimulating the use of indigenous community resources to obtain reciprocal reductions in both crime and isolation. For instance, the group could explore the possibilities of sensitizing and training utilities employees to play crime-prevention roles. It might be useful to authorize the creation of pilot projects as part of the group's exploration, although it does seem more likely that pilot projects will be part of the plan's implementation.

The Legislature should require the consulting parties to report on the nature and requirements, both budgetary and administrative, for implementation of their plan. The Legislature could choose, in the event that those consulting cannot agree on a coordinating mechanism, to accept a document containing dissenting reports. In any case, however, the Legislature should set a reasonable date (probably no more than 18 months) for issuance of the report.

If the findings of the consultation do not persuade otherwise, the Legislature should create the body and require an annual report of findings and initiatives.

Crime as Symptom

The press and the public have continually exhibited concern about crime, and recurrently they have focused especially on the problem of crime against seniors. We have suggested here that crime, in general and against seniors in particular, is best understood as a consequence of a lack of community ties, a lack common in urban and suburban places and even more common among senior citizens. For many seniors, this lack of community is often great enough to be called isolation, which has bad effects other than increasing vulnerability to crime. Isolation and attendent loneliness bring financial problems and increase a variety of kinds of physical and mental debilitation; isolation generally damages the quality of life for many people as they age. We have programs to treat some of the symptoms. For instance, SOFA contractors annually deliver thousands of hot meals. SOFA is helping to develop models for long-term health care, offers legal services and conveys information about home heating assistance. And some other of its efforts--recreation programs, foster grandparents--are more simply oriented toward integration.

We have suggested, further, that it may be possible to use concern about crime to catalyze efforts not only against that particular symptom, but against isolation generally. NPCPA groups would bring to SOFA-related activities the great asset of being truly indigenous to their communities. NPCPA groups are volunteers; they are not professionals ministering under contract to clients, but neighbors looking out for and getting to know their neighbors. Inherent in that distinction is an answer to the question of the kind of response to crime we will have in our communities. If the goal of maximizing quality of life is to frame our crime prevention efforts, we will not simply install locks, urge wariness, provide more police, and then regard a low incidence of reported victimization to be a sure sign that all is well. Independence and activity, instead of passive clienthood--independence and activity both in organizations and informally on the streets--should be a choice available to seniors, a choice that is unencumbered by the duress of fears about crime.

It would be pleasant to be able to say that spending money to get tougher on criminals is "the answer," as it would be if we could say that spending money on youth employment and recreation programs is "the answer." The unpleasant fact is that although state government can help neighbors to marshall their resources, it cannot substitute for the will and energies that are indis-

pensable and that are available only in vital communities. One distinguished academic observer of crime against senior citizens makes this sober observation:

> To say we must get the public involved sounds platitudinous, and I do not suggest that as an answer in itself. There are means, admittedly laborious and fraught with a very considerable amount of frustration, by which citizen volunteer groups can significantly aid the elderly avoid crime. Public information, home visits, telephone reassurances, police talks to groups, special surveys to identify the elderly recluse being terrified by crime or the threat of it--all of these actions have their purpose and none are very effective taken singly. . . . in the long run, no programmatic approach will avail much in suppressing residential crime unless there is active public commitment not only to action but to the basic idea that a crime against one member of a community threatens the common, as well as the individual, weal. In spite of a national outcry against crime, that idea still seems to be curiously inert at the grass roots of American society. (13)

That community spirit is "inert" is a sensitive characterization. It suggests not that it doesn't exist, but rather that it doesn't appear to be active. The safety concerns that lead a few people to band together to fight crime with neighborhood watches, we suggest, are concerns which can be the engine for awakening community. These people, and later their neighbors, may indeed find that getting to know one another and cooperating in neighborhood projects and events make explicitly crime preventative activity more effective. Even better, though, is that these activities, by attacking a root cause of many kinds of disorder--that is, by attacking isolation--can in many ways enrich the lives of senior citizens, and thereby of all of us.

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18. Program description provided by Mr. W. Brad Crowther, Executive Director, Governor's Criminal Justice Committee, State of Rhode Island, July 18, 1986.

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21. A review of the individual project applications indicates that many of the integrative crime prevention program proposals did receive funding, but a small number of programs that received favorable review by DCJS analysts were not approved. Some of these were rejected because they were already receiving state funding, and thus were ineligible for NPCPA monies; others were not perceived as being directly related to crime prevention.

Of the proposals not successful in 1985, 90 were located downstate and 26 were located upstate. Of those rejected, 103 were first-year applicants, 11 were second-year renewal attempts and two were third year projects. Third-year rejectees had correspondence files that indicated they were not following contract guidelines, had disregarded the quarterly report requirements or had refused all offers of DCJS technical assistance. Here is a list of activities proposed in non-funded applications.

Activity	Number of Proposals
Education	70
Neighborhood Watch	60
Youth Activities	32
Target Hardening	24
Escort	22
Property Marking	14
Telephone Reassurance	1
Transportation	1

Most of the denied applications showed weaknesses in organization and execution. Many times, DCJS analysts observed, applicants seemed more interested in obtaining funds than in operating a crime prevention program. Personnel expenditures for such proposals were typically very high and in disproportion to the duties outlined in the descriptive section of the application.

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26. 1985 NPCPA application of Project Outreach of Plainview, N.Y., Division of Criminal Justice Services files, Albany, N.Y.

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29. Interview with project director, Vernon Blue, June 24, 1986.

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