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# The Reactions to Crime Project

*Executive Summary*

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# The Reactions to Crime Project

## Executive Summary

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**U.S. Department of Justice**
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## Introduction

The Reactions to Crime (RTC) Project of The Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research was a five-year (1975-80) interdisciplinary research project investigating the impact of crime on city residents. Supported by the U.S. Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice as part of its Research Agreements Program, the project had a broad mandate to inquire into the ways crime shaped both the attitudes and behaviors of city dwellers. The project was concerned with individual behavior and collective reactions to crime, and with understanding how cities and neighborhoods structure opportunities to engage in those activities. Previous research in the field had emphasized two important areas in which the rising crime rates of the preceding decade had precipitated widespread concern. The first was an interest in understanding the determinants and distribution of fear of crime in cities and the second was a growing interest in efforts by citizens working together to curb the crime rate through direct action. While some important research had been done on both these issues prior to the Reactions to Crime Project, the project took as its primary objective the development of systematic, empirically based understandings of these important phenomena and the links between them. For fear and collective action, while analytically distinct concepts, may very well be understood as reactions to increases in crime.

The long-term support of the National Institute of Justice allowed the project to be a multidisciplinary, multimethod effort. Thought could be given to prior research, not only in terms of instrument development and survey design, but also in terms of extending rather than merely replicating the work of others. Previous research on fear and collective action raised as many new questions as it had answered. The relationship between fear and victimization remained unspecified. The correlates of fear were poorly understood and its

distribution within the population raised important causal issues which demanded further analysis. Our understanding of collective action around crime prevention and crime control was minimal. While efforts were surfacing all over the country to "do something" about crime and fear, scholars and policymakers understood little about the initiation and maintenance of these activities. How did local crime conditions influence these efforts? Under what circumstances were these activities supplementary or antagonistic to formal criminal justice system operations? What types of communities fostered what types of efforts? Did fearful neighborhoods start "collective responses" or were they immobilized by their fear? Did communities with collective responses have less fear than communities without them?

These were the questions with which we began the study. We selected three cities for study: Chicago, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. We then choose 10 neighborhoods in those cities for intensive investigation. Examining 10 different locales allowed us to include a wider range of responses to crime than if we had only examined a single area, and also allowed a comparative perspective. Sites were selected which provided variation along a number of dimensions -- ethnicity, class, crime, levels of organizational activity and responses to crime. This variation is important in facilitating the analysis of crime, neighborhood anti-crime, programs and other contextual conditions which result in, or allow for, the presence of particular responses to crime.

The RTC Project resulted in many substantive insights. Some of the most provocative and important findings are presented here in capsule form. They are examined in greater detail later in the Executive Summary.

- Indirect experience with crime, particularly talking with neighbors about local crime incidents, helps explain levels of fear of crime. Indirect experience with crime is also very common. This helps explain why previous research showed



little relationship between fear and individual victimization.

- People's integration into their community acts as an intervening variable shaping the relationship between fear of crime and communication about crime.
- High levels of fear of crime exist among women and the elderly despite low levels of victimization. It appears that part of this can be explained by the content of communications about crime. Such communications emphasize stories about old and female victims. These stories may become reference points for women and the elderly to judge the seriousness of their own condition.
- Vulnerability to victimization and its more severe consequences has additional effects on levels of fear of crime.
- Personal involvement as a victim of crime, contrary to the findings of earlier surveys, is significantly related to fear, but multivariate analysis is necessary to clarify this.
- Perceptions concerning crime and incivility in one's neighborhood, and pessimism about neighborhood trends, are both positively related to levels of fear.
- A majority of those interviewed in the RTC Survey reported taking at least one personal precaution to avoid crime. The frequency with which these precautions were taken was related to fear, personal vulnerability, vicarious experience with crime and neighborhood conditions.
- On the other hand, houshold protective measures are linked to social and economic factors, not to the direct threat of crime or neighborhood crime conditions.
- Crime seems to shape decisions about where, but not <u>when</u> to move. It is the well-to-do from lower crime central city areas who more

often actually flee.

° This research has broadened our notions of the range and types of activities that neighborhood groups initiate in response to crime. Collective responses to crime include positive youth oriented activities, programs aimed at improving the local environment, personal and property protection behaviors, formal and informal surveillance, and criminal justice oriented activities such as court watching.

° Crime related attitudes and perceptions are not related in simple fashion to participation in collective responses to crime. Be advised that this finding is contrary to what other researchers have found and should still be considered an open issue.

° Collective response to crime are generally carried out in multi-issue groups. Becoming involved in a local group is related to social cohesion. The only clearly antecedent factor which distinguishes those who participate in crime prevention activities is having children in the home.

° The distribution of collective response to crime was affected by the social and cultural context of the community and the influence of city-wide anti-crime programs. Collective anti-crime activities did not mirror crime concerns of local residents, rather they reflect factors related to the social make-up of the community such as family composition, socioeconomic status and ethnicity.

° Citizens view community crme prevention as preventing victimization but also as a concern about the need to re-establish social control within the community.

An important aspect of the RTC Project was its use of multiple, complementary sets of data. These included the findings of extensive, open-ended field



research, city-wide and neighborhood surveys, a content analysis of print media, official crime statistics, police department records, victimization data, and other archival materials. In many cases, we were able to use more than one set of data to "triangulate" on an important set of findings. Just as important were the differences in the nature of the data which were collected, however. They led to a broader understanding of fear and behavior than any single set of data would allow.

By the end of the third year of the project most of these data had been collected and the task of analyzing them had begun. This was made easier by the secondary analyses we had already conducted using data supplied by other researchers who had previously explored this area. The fourth and fifth years of the project were spent drafting and redrafting final reports. The four-volume final report was submitted to the National Institute of Justice on September 1, 1980. These volumes, along with an earlier bibliographic essay reviewing the extant research literature, were the major products of the Reactions to Crime Project.

The four-volume final report sets out to answer several important questions raised by earlier researchers into the impact of crime. It systematically assesses the variations in fear and individual and collective action about crime to be found in the three cities. On the basis of this empirical and analytic work it proposes a theoretical perspective which places the issues of citizen reactions to crime in a new light. It also provides a methodological overview of the project which documents our activities.

This Executive Summary first reviews in some detail the major substantive findings of the RTC Project. It then describes in some detail its major activities. The citations at the end include the major reports, books, and articles produced by the project.

Major Reports

The RTC Project issued a number of papers and reports. The most significant reports are listed in the citations at the end of the summary. In addition to the literature review described above, there were three major volumes issued by the Project presenting the results of our original research. These are:

Coping With Crime: Individual and Neighborhood Reactions, by Wesley G. Skogan and Michael G. Maxfield;*

Strategies for Community Crime Prevention: Collective Responses to Crime in Urban America, by Aaron Podolefsky and Fredric DuBow;**

Crime and Urban Community: Toward a Theory of Neighborhood Security, by Dan A. Lewis and Greta Salem.***

In addition, Albert Hunter and Michael G. Maxfield edited Methodological Overview of the Reactions to Crime Project,*** a collection of papers describing the study neighborhoods and documenting the methodologies employed in the various RTC data-gathering efforts. Hunter contributed an essay assessing the organization and operation of the Project as a research enterprise. Also in press is Case Studies in Community Crime Prevention, by Aaron Podolefsky and Fredric DuBow (available from Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 2600 First Street, Springfield, IL 62717). This book provides a detailed analysis of collective responses to crime in eight communities.

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* Available from Sage Publications, 275 South Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90212.

** Available from Charles C. Thomas Publishing Co. 2600 South First Street, Springfield, IL 62717.

*** Available on loan from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20850.



Coping With Crime

In this report, Skogan and Maxfield examine two broad issues: the bases of the fear of crime, and the consequences of crime for individuals and households in big-city residential neighborhoods. The sources of fear proved to be diverse, and in demonstrating their diversity, several puzzles raised by past research were resolved in this volume.

The first puzzle was the seemingly discordant relationship between victimization and fear of crime. Earlier studies had shown fear was rampant among people who had not been victimized, while some classes of victims were no more afraid than their unvictimized neighbors. In any given year, relatively few people are victimized, but many report high levels of fear. Thus it seemed clear that factors beyond direct experience with victimization were affecting fear; among these were vicarious experiences with crime, neighborhood conditions, and personal vulnerability. This report established that indirect experience with crime explains a great deal of fear, particularly talking with neighbors about local crime incidents. Interestingly, there are two paths to such communication, depending on the local context. People who live in high crime areas tend to hear about victimization experiences routinely, although communications networks are less developed there than in stable, cohesive, low-crime areas. However, since in low-crime areas networks of all kinds are more developed, there is more conversation about less crime. That increased interaction leads to fear. People's integration into the community acts as an intervening variable shaping the relationship between fear of crime and communication about crime. Those who have lived in their neighborhoods for a considerable amount of time, who own their homes and know their neighbors, communicate more frequently with those neighbors. Individuals with these characteristics are more often found in low-crime communities; thus, the very structure of the community which may keep victimization levels low encourages the flow of information about crime.

This analysis of communication about crime helps to explain another paradox about fear of crime, the rather high levels of fear often found in low-crime communities.

Another issue which Skogan and Maxfield examined in detail was the high levels of fear reported by some low-victimization groups. The largest of these are women and the elderly. They found several significant sources of concern about crime among these groups, despite their apparently low levels of risk of victimization.

First, they found the content of the messages about crime which circulate through a community may be a significant source for concern among women and the elderly. Both media accounts of crime in these three cities and the content of personal conversations about crime frequently featured stories of crimes against old or female victims. People generally appear to identify with victims with whom they share things in common. The elderly, for example, who have heard about older persons who have been victimized report higher fear levels than those elderly who have not heard such stories. Accounts of victimization have a more powerful effect on citizens when the listener shares the demographic profile of the victim. Skogan and Maxfield called this the "social proximity" effect. Most survey respondents recalled hearing about women and the elderly being victimized in their neighborhood. In addition, knowing persons nearby who have been victimized has greater consequences for fear than knowing victims from further away. This is a "spatial proximity" effect. Also -- not surprisingly -- vicarious experiences with personal crimes had more effect on fear than did contact with burglary victims, although the latter crime is more frequent and as a result its victims are more widely known. In the aggregate, burglary therefore accounts for a great deal of fear of crime.

Second, it seems clear that vulnerability to victimization and its more severe consequences has additional effects on levels of fear of crime. Some



people are more vulnerable because they are physically less capable of warding off attack or are more likely to suffer long-term effects of being victimized, while others are socially vulnerable because of their residential proximity to high-risk neighborhoods or their inability to recover financially from the effects of crime.

In this report, Skogan and Maxfield also focus on the impact of print and electronic media on fear of crime. From the time of the Crime Commission of the middle 1960s up until the present, commentators have suggested newspapers and television generate fear by their frequent presentation of crime-related incidents and dramas. However, the authors could find no significant effect of general newspaper reading or television watching on levels of fear. Tyler (47) finds no media effects, but Gordon and Heath (13, 14) report readers of specific newspapers with high crime content are more fearful and rank crime as a more serious problem than do nonreaders. (The debate doubtless will continue.) Skogan and Maxfield's finding, or rather the lack of one, suggests concern about the impact of the media on citizen fear levels is misplaced, and while learning about crime does affect individual fear levels, it is interpersonal communication with neighbors which has the most profound consequences.

This volume examines two additional "experiential" sources of fear of crime: victimization and neighborhood crime conditions. While earlier surveys had indicated little relationship between victimization and fear, a detailed analysis which accounted both for the type of experience and other attributes of the victim found personal involvement in crime to be significantly related to fear. Involvement in personal crimes proved more fear-provoking than did being victimized by burglary. Again, however, the frequency of burglary in contrast to rarer violent crimes added to its "net effect" despite its smaller individual consequences.

Finally, several features of the neighborhood environment in which people

find themselves have significant consequences for fear. Perceptions that crimes of various kinds are a problem there, and pessimism about neighborhood trends, both were positively related to levels of fear. Perceived levels of unseemly conduct and poor environmental conditions also affected people's fear of crime. These concerns included the behavior of teenagers, drug use, arson and building abandonment, and vandalism; dubbed "incivilities," they were related to numerous perceptual and behavioral features of people's lives.

The second purpose of Coping With Crime was to explore the relationship between fear of crime and a variety of things that individuals can do to protect themselves from victimization. These included personal precautions, household protection, community involvement, and suburban flight.

Personal precautions are routine strategies people employ to avoid being victimized by violent or predatory personal crime. Some of them involve limiting exposure to attack, while others are things people do when they are exposed to risk. A majority of big-city residents reported taking one or more of the precautions investigated in the RTC survey. The frequency with which they did so was related to their fear, personal vulnerability, vicarious experiences with crime, and neighborhood conditions. These behaviors are all habitual and inexpensive, and their frequency was not greatly affected by role constraints and economic factors.

Household protective measures included things people do to prevent burglary and property theft. These actions are linked to social and economic factors, not to the threat of crime or neighborhood crime conditions. The benefits of these measures accrued largely to higher status, less vulnerable, better-off city residents, and are greatly encouraged by home ownership and strong linkages to the community.

Involvement in organized community responses to crime proved to be related to the general factors which encourage group participation. Survey data for



the three cities supported John Conklin's thesis, presented in his book The Impact of Crime, that crime discourages neighborhood involvement while it stimulates fear. Participants in organized anti-crime efforts report the fewest neighborhood crime problems, the most community cohesion, the lowest levels of incivility, and the least fear.

Finally, survey data for the Chicago metropolitan area were used to investigate the correlates of white flight, and the comparative costs and benefits of city and suburban living. Crime seems to shape decisions about where to move (but not when), primarily on the basis of the relative attractiveness of lower crime suburban locations. Once they have decided to move, people rate crime as an important factor in shaping residential choice, although it is the well-to-do from lower crime central city areas who more often actually flee.

## Strategies for Community Crime Prevention

The second major Reactions to Crime Final Report, Strategies for Community Crime Prevention: Collective Responses to Crime in Urban America, was authored by Aaron Podolefsky and Fredric DuBow. This volume focuses in detail on the collective efforts of citizens to control and prevent criminal activity. Previous research in this area is far more limited than in the areas of fear and individual responses, and there was a greater need for descriptive research on the variations in the types of organized neighborhood responses to crime which develop in various communities. This descriptive analysis is particularly important in light of governmental initiatives currently underway to encourage community crime prevention programs. This volume can serve as a guide to the relationship between community-based crime prevention activity, the local social-political organization and the cultural context.

In this report, Podolefsky and DuBow examine three major issues: the range and classification of community anti-crime activities, the factors affecting

citizen participation, and the sources of intercommunity variation.

Previous research on community organizations and crime had structured scholarly discussion along several lines. An almost unquestioned assumption of recent years was that crime prevention was synonymous with target hardening. Participation in collective responses was interpreted as a function of concern about the issue of crime. It was assumed that if one raised the salience of crime for individuals, participation would follow. Practitioners and researchers alike were dismayed that participation levels remained low in a variety of crime prevention programs in spite of the efforts of organizers. Substantively, it was assumed that crime problems identified in the target area would be the priority issues for residents. Thus, communities having comparatively high burglary rates would "naturally" need a burglary prevention effort. From this view, "problem identification" was synonymous with compiling crime reports.

However much intuitive sense this made, research and informed opinion cast doubt on the utility of these ideas. Citizen participation levels remained well below expectations and the longevity of these efforts was limited. Typically it was concluded that more citizen education would remedy the problem by overcoming apathy.

Podolefsky and DuBow begin their study of collective efforts by describing and classifying the variety of activities which citizens identify as crime prevention. Collective responses to crime were defined as activities undertaken by groups of unrelated individuals acting jointly to do something about crime. In order to understand citizens' efforts, emphasis was placed upon the actors' perceptions of their behavior.

The variety of activities defined by citizens as doing something about crime fall into two broad categories: victimization prevention approaches and social problems approaches. The distinction rests upon differences between attempts to reduce opportunities for criminal victimization and programs to



improve general conditions and opportunities for residents. In the former, collective responses were aimed at reducing the risk citizens face through protective and surveillance behaviors as well as other criminal justice oriented activities. In the latter, efforts were made to prevent the emergence in the neighborhood of conditions which residents felt led to crime.

In each of the communities studied, Podolefsky and DuBow found that efforts to deal with the perceived causes of crime, as well as the existence of crime, were ongoing. Community groups concerned themselves with local conditions seen to foster or breed crime. Most were particularly concerned about the effects of these conditions on neighborhood youth. Unemployment, lack of recreational facilities, conditions such as abandoned buildings used as havens by troublesome youth, alcohol and drug abuse and the presence of drug dealers, poor parental supervision and guidance of youth, the isolating effects of city environments in which social integration is lacking and where neighbors do not know each other, the lack of pride in the community and the lack of community power were all seen to be directly or indirectly related to crime.

Collective responses to crime are responses to criminogenic environment, the threat of victimization, the lack of social control and a general concern about the inability of society and social institutions to protect the individual. It is clear that criminal actions are not viewed as isolated incidents, disconnected from the multiplicity of social problems which confront citizens, and particularly the young. Unlike large bureaucracies which segregate social problems into different agencies -- one for crime, one for housing, one for education, and yet another for employment -- leaders of most community groups were concerned about the inherent linkages between these social problems and were loath to deal with victimization alone as the central issue of crime. Podolefsky and DuBow conclude, therefore, that neighborhood groups are an appropriate level of organization for addressing the crime issue from an

integrated multi-dimensional perspective.

Podolefsky and DuBow transcend conventional wisdom on collective responses to crime by broadening our notions of the range and types of activities that neighborhood groups initiate in response to crime. Not only are there attempts to limit victimization by collective action, but crime is popularly viewed in terms of a wider range of precipitating factors which can be affected by group activities. Just as Skogan and Maxfield "expanded the victimization perspective" as it related to individual attitudes and behaviors, so Podolefsky and DuBow provide the empirical analysis necessary for expanding that perspective with respect to collective responses to crime. Collective responses to crime include positive youth-oriented activities (e.g., recreation, employment, counseling, education, etc.), programs aimed at improving the local environment (physically, socially and economically), personal and property protection behaviors (operation I.D., Whistle STOP), formal and informal surveillance (radio patrols), as well as criminal justice oriented activities (court watching, pressure on police, etc.). Crime prevention is not seen solely as victimization reduction activity.

The second major issue to be addressed by Podolefsky and DuBow is the dynamics of local participation in crime prevention activities. Earlier efforts assumed participation was a function of individual motivation and personal awareness. Attempts to increase participation used educational messages to individuals which informed citizens of the dangers they face and the utility of the remedies provided by crime prevention practitioners. The assumption was that crime-related information would motivate citizens to participate. Paradoxically, while fear and concern are known to be widespread, participation in collective efforts to reduce crime remained low. Podolefsky and DuBow found that crime-related attitudes and perceptions are <u>not</u> related to participation in collective responses to crime (9, 10).

Previous researchers had also indicated that an important question involved



the process by which groups emerged to do something about crime. By focusing on a range of groups within particular locales, Podolefsky and DuBow found that few groups are organized around the crime issue and crime is seldom the first issue which a group addresses. Collective responses to crime are generally carried out in multi-issue groups. And most groups have undertaken some form of collective responses to crime. Thus, community groups are not themselves reactions to crime, but rather exist as part of the urban context. They are an important part of the <u>structure of opportunity</u> out of which anti-crime efforts can emerge, and within which individuals may participate.

Podolefsky and DuBow argue that participation is the result of a two-step process: becoming involved with a local group and becoming a participant in anti-crime activities. Becoming involved with a local group, which is the major step, is related to factors of social integration (attachment to the neighborhood, home ownership, and long-term residence). Community groups which undertake anti-crime initiatives are quite successful in enlisting the participation of their membership. Having children in the home is the only clearly antecedent factor distinguishing participants from nonparticipants.

In contrast to individual responses, participation in collective responses is neither a result of fear nor concern about crime. Rather, collective efforts are undertaken by groups of people who are more socially integrated but not more fearful. Podolefsky and DuBow conclude that targeting individual crime perceptions is not a desirable strategy for stimulating citizen participation. Indeed, since higher levels of fear are associated with avoidance of the streets at night, increasing fear can undermine informal street surveillance (a type of social control behavior which may decrease crime). Moreover, the public as a whole (87% in our sample), both participants and nonparticipants alike, agree that neighborhood groups can help reduce crime. Not much is to be gained from a communications strategy which seeks to develop such perceptions.

The third major issue concerns the distribution of victimization prevention and social problems approaches in the 10 communities under investigation. The authors argue that similar crime problems and concerns may affect different communities in different fashion, and that contextual factors may, therefore, affect the development of collective initiatives. They show that the types of collective anti-crime activities did not mirror crime concerns of local residents. Concern about street attacks, for example, did not necessarily lead to surveillance efforts. Rather, the distribution of collective responses was affected by the social and cultural context of the community and the influence of city-wide anti-crime programs.

Podolefsky and DuBow argue that the nature of the community itself affects the community's response to crime. Given similar levels of crime concern, communities did not respond to crime in the same way. While one community responded with a strong emphasis on getting kids off the streets through recreation and employment, another responded by emphasizing neighborhood surveillance. Both are methods of social control, but each represents a different approach.

While both social problems approaches and victimization prevention approaches were undertaken in each of the 10 communities, each revealed a tendency to emphasize one approach over the other. These tendencies, or what Podolefsky and DuBow call inclinations, were a result of factors in the social and cultural context of the community, namely, (a) family composition, (b) socioeconomic status, and (c) race and ethnicity.

Differences among communities on these dimensions resulted in different perceptions of the etiology of crime and perception of the perpetrators as insiders or outsiders. These differences, in turn, resulted in inclinations towards different strategies for doing something about crime. For example, family-oriented communities (notwithstanding differences in the proportion of youth) tended towards youth programs and environmental concerns, while communities



of young professionals tended towards protective measures. Minority groups tended to focus on social problems and shied away from programs run by police.

Given the opportunity, community groups followed their inclinations. However, lack of resources, such as effective community groups, in some communities limited the capacity to respond. Thus, social, political and cultural dimensions within the community affected collective behavioral responses to crime.

Collective behaviors were also affected by the existence of institutionalized and legitimized city-wide anti-crime programs: Town Watch in Philadelphia, Beat-reo in Chicago and SAFE in San Francisco. Groups undertook particular activities (generally victimization prevention oriented) because the opportunity was available through these programs. Citizen's band radio patrols, for example, were found in all three Philadelphia communities but not in Chicago or San Francisco. Programs may be adopted which are geared neither to the particular crime problem in the community nor to the social and cultural context. A "menu" approach would allow community groups to select more "appropriate" responses.

A picture has emerged in this volume which reveals differences between citizens on the one hand and researchers and policymakers on the other with regard to the conceptualization of community crime prevention. Whereas the latter often viewed the problem as one of preventing victimization, citizens add to this their concern about the breakdown in social control and its effects upon community and future generations. The broad range of activities undertaken by community groups represent different strategies for re-establishing social control within the community. Collective responses to crime do not mirror crime concerns, but rather reflect the social composition of the community. Participants in these activities are people who are more attached to the community, rather than those who are more fearful.

Crime and the Urban Community

This report is a synthetic and interpretive summary of the empirical findings of the Reactions to Crime Project. The authors, Lewis and Salem, argue that scholars and policymakers may need to rethink their approach to the study of the impact of crime on the attitudes and behaviors of citizens. Lewis and Salem suggest the "social control perspective", a theoretical orientation which evolved out of the "Chicago School of Sociology" (see also reference 25), may prove a more useful way to approach the problem. The social control perspective assumes the importance of the capacity of social groups to regulate themselves and sees social change as affecting that capacity. Urban communities are buffeted by population shifts, racial changes, business expansion and disinvestment. These changes challenge local institutions to preserve conventional standards of behavior. A variety of events and conditions signal to residents their values are no longer guiding the action of residents. The social control perspective implies communities which fail to combat this social change will experience increased fear.

Community organizations play an important role in this conceptualization of the problem, for they are a primary mechanism for asserting community values through collective action. Organizations do this by attempting to control "signs of incivility" which appear in the community. They attack a variety of conditions and problems as a way of preserving local values in the face of direct and indirect threats. The local structure of opportunity to participate in community organizations, coupled with a local capacity to influence land-use decisions, are important factors in mitigating the fear of crime among large-city residents. The effect of these contextual factors are best seen in the impact of incivility issues on local citizens. In neighborhoods where problems of incivility are addressed positively by strong organizations, or where those issues emerge as problems within families, fear is not accentuated. But if



incivility issues emerge in areas where there are few effective organizations to channel concern into viable political action, fear levels are magnified. This magnification process is particularly strong in neighborhoods where individuals have strong vested interests in preserving a healthy moral climate but lack an effective arena for political action. Fear of crime then is only partially an assessment of the risk of victimization contained within a geographical terrain. That fear is more the consequence of both subjective assessment of moral and physical decline of the area and the lack of political effectiveness which residents manifest in combatting that decline. In neighborhoods where local control of land-use decisions is exercised, either through private ownership or community organization, fear is moderated. The level of incivility in a neighborhood is a direct measure of that effectiveness and a crucial indicator of the level of fear in that area. Where incivility is low, fear is low; where incivility is high, fear will also rise if local citizens cannot either formally or informally mount a campaign to regain control over their own moral and physical living space.

The problem of crime, seen in this context, is the problem of maintaining order. Communications about victimizations as well as concern about abandoned buildings, graffiti and other signs of decay all transmit a message about the breakdown of order in the community. Collective responses to crime cover a broad range of issues which, if addressed properly, will lead to the maintenance of conventional standards. Thus, crime is best understood as an issue of social control in which the indicators of disorganization are combatted by local organizations. Lewis and Salem argue that fear increases as communities lose the capacity to regulate themselves. Collective responses emerge to combat the deterioration of community values.

The authors go on to discuss the implications of their work for policy development. In doing so, they contrast the social perspective to the victimization

perspective which is currently guiding much of the research into reactions to crime. Figure 1 depicts the differences between the two perspectives. According to the victimization perspective, a crime is an event defined by criminal statutes as illegal, which represents a joint experience for offender and victim. Fear is a consequence of either direct or indirect experience with the crime event. Persons respond to these events either individually or collectively: individual responses, because they focus on personal protection, tend to lead to isolation and distrust, thus deterioration of the community; collective responses, on the other hand, are efforts to decrease crime in the community induce cohesion, and reduce the opportunities for victimizations to occur.

The social control perspective treats crime as an indicator of increased social disorganization reflecting a community's incapacity to exert social control. Fear is a response induced by the signs of social disorganization perceived in the environment. Local institutions rather than individuals respond to crime in efforts designed to increase political and social control in the community and to promote social cohesion among residents.

Whereas the victimization perspective looks at how a community is affected by crime or the response to it, the social control perspective sees the community as the context in which events occur, as a set of institutional relations through which local solidarity is maintained. The authors argue that the victimization perspective spawned a series of policy initiatives which they call community crime prevention. These, for the most part, were federally funded programs focused on preventing crime and reducing the impact of crime (especially fear) on the residents of urban neighborhoods.

The programs (housed in the Departments of Justice, Housing and Urban Development, and ACTION) reflected a change in the way policymakers think about crime prevention, based in large measure on the victimization perspective. The gaze of some policymakers shifted from offenders and their motivations to



FIGURE 1

A COMPARISION OF PERSPECTIVES

| | Victimization Perspective | Social Control Perspective |
|---|---|---|
| Crime | Crime is an event which is defined by criminal statutes as illegal. Crime is experienced by the individual. The potential victim is the key actor, for higher victimization is the manifestation of crime. | Crime is a perceived process of the decline of the local moral order. This perception is shared by communities. The potential offender is the key actor in the decline of the moral order. |
| Fear | Fear is a consequence for the individual of experiencing crime. That experience can either be direct victimization or based on an assessment of local conditions. | Fear is a communal response to the decline in the moral order. That response is contingent upon the signs of disorganization perceived in the environment. Communities are generally fearful to the extent that these signs increase unchecked. |
| Responses | Citizens respond to crime individually or collectively. Individual responses are isolating and crime producing. Collective responses are crime reducing and community building. Most citizens react individually, consequently crime usually disintegrates community. | Local institutions, not individuals, respond to crime. Responses aim to strengthen the socialization and social control capacities of those institutions. Provincialism is the capacity to modify the behavior of potential offenders through the control of land and its utilization. The effect of crime is limited in provincial communities. |
| Community | Community is disintegrated by crime. Community solidarity is a consequence of overcoming the effects of fear. It is difficult to accomplish in areas with high fear levels. | Community is the context in which crime affects the moral order. Community is a set of institutional relationships through which solidarity is maintained. |

victims and their environments. Crime prevention policy had meant, until the advent of the victimization perspective, modifying the predispositions of those who might commit illegal acts. Earlier policies differed in their focus; some concentrated on the social and economic factors which predisposed adolescents to criminal activities, while others aimed at directly changing attitudes and motivations of offenders. The goal was to change the victimizer.

The victimization perspective leads the policymaker in a radically different direction. Figure 2 schematizes Lewis and Salem's discussion of linkages between crime and fear in the victimization perspective. The "unit of analysis" in this paradigm is the citizen/victim of crime; that is, the person who experiences the victimization event. The challenge for the policymaker is to increase the likelihood that collective responses will emerge in the aftermath of the crime event.

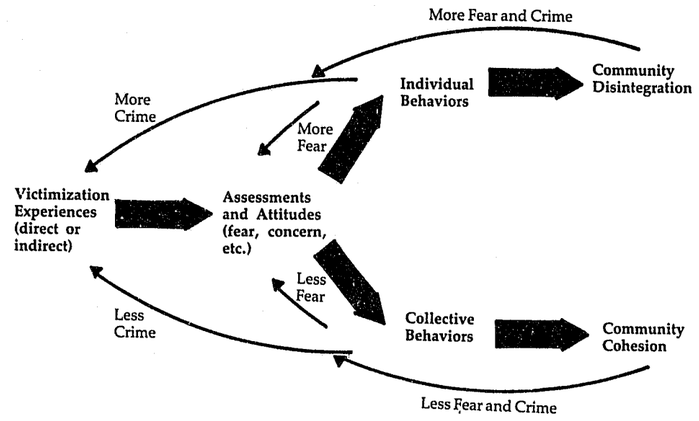
The policy of increasing the likelihood of collective responses follows directly from this new theoretical orientation. Rather than attempting to alter the predispositions and motivations of the criminal, as progressive reforms throughout the century had sought to do, community crime prevention strategies prevent crime by altering the relations between the criminal, victim, and environment, reducing the opportunity for victimization. Crime is to be prevented, not by changing perpetrators, but rather by educating potential victims and thus limiting the opportunities for victimization.

This is a crime prevention policy which aims at changing the behavior of community residents and the structure of urban communities not, because they produce criminals, but rather because they produce victims. Crimes, which had been conceived of as <u>acts</u> committed by offenders, were now defined as <u>events</u> in which offenders and victims participated. Community crime prevention seeks to reduce the number of these events in a neighborhood by increasing the capacity of that neighborhood to respond collectively. Community crime prevention



FIGURE 2

Victimization Perspective Paradigm



programs define victimizations and their negative consequences (fear, isolation, and distrust) as the problem, and aim, by reducing crime, to reduce those consequences.

These interventions will have the consequence, if they are successful, of reshaping the potential vulnerability of citizens to victimization. While this approach indirectly shapes the motivation of offenders by increasing their risk of apprehension and decreasing the benefits to be obtained through illegal activities, the emphasis has shifted away from changing their personalities or economic opportunities. Traditional criminological theories of crime causation emphasized socialization, subcultural and class variables and attempted prevention strategies which manipulate these factors. Community crime prevention theory does not mention class, norms or human development, but rather is a utilitarian, rationalistic approach which aims at reshaping social relations among noncriminal area residents. Motivation still remains central, but it is the motivation of the offended rather than the offender that becomes pivotal to the success of the intervention. Individuals must be motivated to act collectively rather than individually. Organizations are developed to give individuals options when they respond to crime. Collective responses may be the policy outcome sought, but it is sought through individual incentives and resources which facilitate participation.

The utility of community crime prevention strategies depends in large degree on how well the victimization perspective captures the experience of citizens with crime. There are several key empirical questions about the relationship between victimization, fear, and individual and collective responses which must be addressed. The victimization perspective posits the centrality of victimization events in community crime prevention. As individuals experience crimes, they assess their risk as increased and their concern rises. They react either individually, which is likely to increase their community's victimization



level, or collectively with neighbors, which may reduce crime and improve social cohesion. Intervention strategies are aimed at increasing the likelihood that the citizen will participate in collective efforts, thus preventing victimizations and increasing community cohesion.

The policies that follow from this construction of the crime problem are designed to enable collective responses to emerge. The response rather than the crime itself becomes the focus of action. The result is a strategy for crime prevention postulating that to build a community is to deter crime. Strengthening ties between residents building the capacity for citizen action, and creating a better physical environment are all goals which potentially improve the quality of life in urban neighborhoods. They focus not on treating the deficiencies of criminals, but rather on improving the lives of citizens. While there are many limitations in the victimization perspective and community crime prevention policies, this emphasis on building community rather than rehabilitating offenders signals an important innovation in crime prevention policy. This innovation allows for the development of policies which address the organization of the community and those factors which improve social cohesion and control, rather than the traditional focus on what causes criminals to act illegally.

Lewis and Salem's examination of fear of crime in 10 neighborhoods in Chicago, San Francisco, and Philadelphia revealed a broad range of concerns that included but were not limited to the crimes considered by those working within the victimization perspective. Respondents questioned about crime problems described a range of what were labeled "incivilities," or undesirable features of their communities -- abandoned buildings, teenagers hanging around, illegal drug use, and vandalism. In most instances, these other problems appeared to generate at least as much concern as did the crimes customarily considered by scholars examining fear of crime. And those

concerns appeared to be equally potent in generating fear of crime.

Furthermore, when asked what they were doing about crime in the neighborhoods, respondents listed a wide range of activities which went well beyond those offered by the crime prevention programs envisioned by criminal justice officials. Whereas law enforcement officials identify primarily those activities designed to diminish opportunities for victimization to occur, citizens include in their definition of crime prevention such things as efforts to improve the neighborhood, to promote social integration, and to provide services for young people (34). Local residents see physical, social, and service improvements in their neighborhoods as effective crime prevention mechanisms. They recognize, as the victimization orientation does not, the importance of the community context in which events take place.

This was also underscored in the finding that levels of fear in some neighborhoods clearly defied expectations that high versus low levels of crime inevitably induce high versus low levels of fear. In seeking to account for such deviations, the authors again turned to contextual variables; they found a community's political and social resources appeared to constitute the prime mediating force between the perception of crime and other neighborhood problems and the subsequent expression of fear. Neighborhoods with political power, for example, appeared more capable of addressing local problems than did those without it; and this capacity often appeared to contribute to diminishing fear.

The power to react to community problems either was derived from well established political connections or stemmed from the efforts of active community organizations. Neighborhoods without such power, even those in which only minimal problems were identified as cause for concern, exhibited fear levels that appeared to be higher than was warranted by the crime rate and perceived problems. Fear increased as a function of the perception of change in the area when local residents had little capacity to control that change.



An additional means of support for local residents confronting crime and related problems was provided by high levels of social integration in the neighborhood. This could be induced intentionally, via such organizations as block clubs, or develop "naturally" where population movement was minimal and patterns of association within the neighborhood were well established. The value of the latter was illustrated by the comment of one respondent who noted, "We are like a family here, we take care of our own." Similarly, a block club member pointed to the value of such organizing, saying, "On my block, I'm known and I know everybody. I can feel safe walking on my block at twelve o'clock at night. I'm afraid on the bus, but when I reach my neighborhood, I'm not afraid."

Thus, both in the identification of forces that mediate between residents' conception of crime problems and appropriate crime prevention activities, the neighborhood context assumes an importance that is overlooked by the research and crime prevention programs informed by the victimization perspective.

This perceptual gap separating researchers, crime prevention strategists, and citizens was also underscored in Podolefsky and Dubow's (9) analysis of collective responses to crime. They found citizens were not likely to respond to inducements offered by independent crime prevention programs; participation in such programs was more likely when they were adopted by an organization with multiple purposes and with which neighborhood residents were already associated. Because a large percentage of members of such organizations participate in crime prevention programs when they are adopted, success in crime prevention appears more likely when the program is aimed at organizations rather than at individuals. However, it was also found that crime serves only infrequently as an organizing impetus for neighborhood groups. Rather such groups tend to unite around other issues and only take on crime and other social problems when they have achieved some organizational maturity.

Furthermore, there is no systematic evidence that an individual's attitude toward crime is associated with participation in collective responses. Research at the Center For Urban Affairs and Policy Research has found no relationship between perceptions of crime in the neighborhoods and collective participation in crime prevention activities, nor did Podolefsky and Dubow (9) find a connection between crime concerns and such participation. Communities with higher concerns about burglary, for example, do not exhibit a higher incidence of burglary prevention programs. Instead, participation in crime prevention appears to be most closely associated with membership in community organizations with diverse purposes. As was discussed above, such involvement is not so much associated with attitudes toward crime as it is a function of the community's social composition (family income, number of children, and family status).

Communities have the potential for reducing fear when local organizations are active in controlling the signs of disorganization. Fear reduction is not simply a matter for the professional. It has an added political dimension, since it is necessary to mobilize community groups and local leaders who can articulate groups' interests and implement programs themselves. The significance of this shift in authority from professionals to citizens is substantial, for fear reduction, according to the social control perspective, calls for assisting communities in their efforts to reduce signs of disorganization rather than attempting to reduce victimization through the traditional criminal justice methods. This important shift in emphasis places community organizations in a central position, for it serves as both the sociological unit of analysis and the political agent of change. Knowledge of the community and legitimacy within it becomes essential to achieving fear reduction. A perspective which places both the problem and the solution in a community context gives meaning to the emphasis on local leaders and dilutes local officials' claim to a professional monopoly on the knowledge necessary to reduce fear.



If there is one implication which follows from this analysis, it is that there is nothing neutral about the urban context. Patterns of migration, local political development, the distribution of urban services, and the impact of victimization all affect communities differentially. An intelligent fear prevention program must be cognizant of the differential pressures of urban life on the generation of fear at the community level. This also means that there will be situations in which the community resources are minimal and disorganization extensive. In these situations, there is little that any form of community crime prevention can offer. The "appropriate technology" may be to protect citizens through traditional criminal justice agencies and introduce resources to improve the community's competitive position in the metropolis. To suggest that community crime prevention strategies can redress economic injustice and racial discrimination is to go beyond the theoretical synthesis we are proposing and doom the policies to failure. This is a disservice to both a promising strategy and desperate people.

## Project Activities

While the Reactions to Crime Project was a large and multifaceted enterprise, its activities revolved around five focal points: 1) a review and synthesis of previous research on fear and citizen responses to crime, 2) the creation of an archive of survey data on those topics which could be systematically reanalyzed, 3) fielding a large sample survey gathering new data on our study cities and neighborhoods, and 4) conducting intensive ethnographic field research in the same communities. In addition, 5) a systematic content analysis was conducted of newspapers serving the three cities.

### The Literature Review

The first year of the Project's operation focused upon a review of past research on citizen attitudes and responses to crime. That effort resulted in

a published literature review and annotated bibliography which informed the second and third years of data collection and data analysis.

The review, Reactions to Crime: A Critical Review of the Literature by Fredric DuBow, Edward McCabe and Gail Kaplan (10), synthesized all the pertinent materials collected during the first year of the project.* It helped define our field of inquiry by assessing both published and unpublished materials germane to the impact of crime on the general public. The essay described the state of knowledge in the areas of fear, behavioral responses and collective action and sharpened conceptualizations of those issues. DuBow and his colleagues pinpointed many of the contradictory findings of earlier research and clarified the theoretical assumptions and methodological limitations in those studies. The essay not only reviewed earlier research; it also set the tone for the next four years of research by the Reactions to Crime Project.

The review was divided into three sections: perceptions of crime, individual behavioral reactions, and collective responses to crime. The first segment devoted considerable attention to developing a three-fold typology of crime perceptions -- values, judgments, and emotions. This was necessary for two reasons. First, the term "fear of crime" is used to refer to a wide range of phenomena that are quite different. By reserving this term for emotional responses to crime it is easier to compare findings across studies. Second, a number of studies indicated the relationships among evaluations of crime, judgments, emotions, and other variables were consistent. Factors associated with perceptions of crime rates and crime risks, for example, do not always have a similar relationship to fear. The elderly may be less distinctive from the general population in terms of their judgments about crime than they are on the basis of their level of fear (42).

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*This review is available from the U.S. Government Printing Office -- Stock No. 027-000-00873-9.



Past research on factors affecting crime perceptions suggested its many complexities, but it was clear the general level of crime or changes in crime rates do not entirely account for levels of fear and perceived risk. A number of other factors come into play in shaping these perceptions. Unlike earlier studies, RTC research indicates direct personal involvement in crime -- being a victim -- has adverse consequences for both fear and behavior (46, 47).

There was little past research on how individuals obtain and interpret information about crime. There is widespread belief that when people rely on vicarious sources of information such as the mass media they tend to see crime as a more serious problem. There is a small amount of direct evidence to support this belief, but it is far from conclusive. Research by the RTC Project indicates media exposure does not directly engender much personal fear, although it affects abstract perceptions of the nature of crime generally (14, 46, 47). The most relevant indirect evidence on this is the consistently reported finding that people tend to see crime as less of a problem in their own neighborhood, where they can make use of experience and interpersonal communications to form their judgments, than in other geographic locations -- other neighborhoods, the city or nation as a whole -- where they must rely more heavily on information from the mass media.

Running through many discussions of crime perceptions are judgments about the appropriateness or rationality of the fears of the general population or of particular subcategories of people. Are people more afraid or less afraid of crime than they ought to be? In an absolute sense, the answer to this question does not hinge on empirical inquiry but in a relative sense, it is possible to compare various risks that people face and the levels of fear associated with them. Put in these terms, it is clear there is more fear of crime than there is of other dangers which are more likely to occur. In this sense, one would conclude there is too much fear of crime or too little fear of other risks.

When a similar line of reasoning is used to assess the levels of fear of different demographic subcategories, one would conclude that women and the elderly are too afraid or men and younger persons are too unafraid.

A number of writers challenge this way of assessing the rationality or appropriateness of fear levels. They either argue that crime is fundamentally more dangerous than other bodily or material risks or they disagree with the way probabilities of crime are calculated. The importance of this debate is not that it will result in answering the issue of the rationality of crime fears. Rather, it has stimulated researchers to refine their understanding of crime as personal and societal phenomena, and to place crime in a larger context of social problems.

The literature on perceptions of crime provided considerable data on the distribution of these views; the major task for the future is to understand how they are shaped and changed over time.

The second section of the review examined typologies of individual crime related behavior, evidence on the frequency of these activities, data on the relationship between experiences, perceptions and actions, and the effects of behavior on crime. It found research on behavioral reactions to be very fragmented. Most studies dealt with one or a few such behaviors at a time. This led to our investigations of the crime-related options and strategies in which individuals engage (15, 23, 24, 25, 33, 37). Such studies will increase our understanding of how these behaviors fit together and what patterns of activity are associated with people living in certain locales.

There is considerable evidence that people's behaviors are less affected by crime perceptions than is often thought. Past research indicates that for decisions about transportation usage, home relocation, recreational patterns, and going out at night (for the elderly), crime risks are minor considerations.

Our understanding of avoidance behaviors would be enhanced if the perceived



necessity to engage in certain behaviors could be taken into account as well. The importance of behavioral constraints is suggested by the finding that women and the elderly who work outside the home are less likely to engage in crime avoidance behavior than those who do not. Skogan and Maxfield (46) examined the impact of these constraints on crime prevention and avoidance behaviors.

Of the relatively undemanding crime prevention behaviors that people can engage in, such as home defense, avoidance, and lock installation, levels of precaution are already quite high. Efforts to encourage further use of these home protective behaviors may prove difficult. Past research indicates people generally do not perceive crime as a major personal problem. At the same time they are pessimistic about the usefulness of more protective and avoidance behavior in reducing their risks.

It is questionable whether people should significantly increase the quantity of their avoidance behaviors. These tactics are based on stereotypes which are often only loosely related to actual risk. Further, there is a possibililty that such behaviors may increase fear and, by lessening social interactions in public places, decrease levels of social control and increase crime rates.

Past research indicated a strong relationship between high area crime rates, greater levels of fear of crime and more avoidance, general behavioral changes and participation, but not household protective behaviors. In Skogan and Maxfield's work (46) home protective purchases and behaviors proved to be related to a different set of factors and dynamics than other types of reactions to crime. In urban areas they are most strongly linked to home ownership, confidence in the neighborhood, and a long-term commitment to remaining in the area rather than to the actual threat of crime.

It is widely assumed there is a relationship between social cohesion and informal participation, and that these can reduce crime and fear, but at the outset of the RTC Project, the amount of direct evidence supporting these

hypotheses was small. Our research has greatly strengthened that argument (27, 30, 39, 46).

The final section of the review pulled together scattered research on participation in collective anti-crime activities. What appeared at first to be a substantial body of research on community crime prevention turned out to be primarily studies of service-delivery programs run by the police and other agencies and involving citizens primarily as clients. Relatively few studies considered autonomous collective actions by citizens in organizations at the local level.

Although there are no quantitative studies to support the belief, there is widespread agreement that collective activity in response to crime has greatly increased over the past 10 to 15 years. These activities have emphasized crime control (surveillance and reporting) or crime prevention (residential target hardening or efforts to deal with the causes of crime). Responses dealing with the causes of crime have received much less attention than crime control or target-hardening approaches.

Comparative studies which consider the histories of ongoing and discontinued organizations would provide a framework in which many of the questions about how responses emerge, develop, succeed, or fail could best be understood. For many other questions, such as the relationship between informal and formal collective responses, in-depth studies of collective responses within specific locales are needed (36).

Perhaps the single most important set of relationships that needs study involves collective responses to crime and the degree of neighborhood cohesion. A major assumption shared by researchers and policymakers is that collective crime responses can help increase the sense of community which, at the same



time, will support informal social control processes that will reduce the incidence of crime. Though appealing, these assumptions have not been confirmed by existing studies.

## The Data Archive

While the literature review drew together many published and unpublished reports of survey studies of citizens' attitudes and reactions to crime, it was also necessary to re-examine the original data upon which many of them were based. No matter how extensive it is, any written report inevitably glosses over specific issues in which other researchers may be particularly interested. Similar variables may be coded or collapsed in incompatible ways in different studies. Different kinds of statistical analyses may be used even when different reports address the same problem. Finally, researchers inevitably ignore large portions of their own data in published articles, focusing in detail only on a few of them. A review of the questionnaires used in earlier studies indicated there was more similarity in the data than was reflected in the numerous research reports.

Several standards were employed to select data for the archive and potential reanalysis. First, we were interested only in data sets which focused intensively on fear and behavior. A reanalysis of national Roper and Gallup opinion poll data which had been conducted by the University of Pittsburgh adequately captured what could be gleaned from individual questions which occasionally are appended to national opinion surveys. We wanted to develop multiple-item indicators of several key theoretical constructs with the reanalysis data, and this limited the scope of the archive to crime-focused research studies and surveys conducted as part of criminal-justice evaluations.

We also were interested in surveys which were conducted at more than one point in time. Because this standardized to some extent differences in survey

procedures and jurisdictions, such studies would enable us to replicate our analyses across data sets which were maximally similar. If those replications converged on the same set of findings we would be more confident of their generality.

Finally, we searched in particular for surveys which were designed to characterize neighborhoods, and which could be used to explore the effects of neighborhood-level contextual variables upon individual attitudes and actions.

While not every data set satisfied all of these criteria, and some were added solely because of their unique and useful content, we found a number of surveys that seemed useful. These were assembled, along with all of the detailed documentation on survey procedures and sampling that we could muster, and transformed into analysis files. Inventories of similar items were drawn up, and the files were organized to maximize their comparability across data sets.

The principal data sets in the archive included:

1. Hartford Evaluation Surveys. These surveys (supported by the National Institute of Justice) were conducted in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1973 and 1975. The data were collected by the Survey Program, a facility of the University of Massachusetts-Boston and the Joint Center for Urban Studies of Harvard University and MIT, for the Hartford Institute of Criminal and Social Justice. The surveys gathered data on victimization, perceptions of crime, fear of crime, and individual and household protective behavior. Samples were drawn from the target neighborhood for the program, an adjacent control area, and the remainder of the city.

Data from the Hartford surveys were used in a variety of RTC project studies These included a methodological investigation of alternative operationalizations of the concept of fear of crime (2), and studies of the impact of neighborhood surveillance activity on fear (5), family composition and fear (7), fear of



crime among the elderly (8), and the relationship between neighborhood crime rates and fear (29).

2. Kansas City Evaluation Surveys. These surveys were conducted for the Kansas City, Missouri police department as part of an evaluation of its preventive patrol experiment. The surveys, funded by the Police Foundation, were conducted in 1972 and 1973. They included adults living in the South Patrol Division of Kansas City, an area which serves about one-third of the city. Six hundred respondents in the first wave of the survey were reinterviewed in the second, the only panel sample in the data archive.

Data from these surveys were used by the RTC project to document the frequency and distribution of crime prevention activities (33), to examine the impact of neighborhood differences in fear when individual attributes are taken into account (21), and to assess the link between fear and avoidance (15).

3. Cincinnati Evaluation Survey. This survey was conducted in 1973 by the Urban Institute to evaluate a neighborhood team policing project. Respondents were drawn from three target and control neighborhoods, and from the remainder of the city. The RTC Project used these data to replicate Conklin's "threshold" hypothesis about the relationship between local crime rates and levels of fear (17).

4. Portland Survey. This survey was conducted in 1974. It included both the city of Portland, Oregon, and part of its metropolitan area. It was designed to evaluate a community crime prevention program, and included a number of questions about individual and household preventive measures and participation in organized anti-crime activities. This survey had a large sample, and employed sophisticated measures of victimization and fear.

These data were used by the RTC Project to examine the frequency and distribution of seven classes of crime-related behavior, including weapon ownership, target-hardening, and participation in organized programs (33).

5. Chicago Metropolitan Area Survey. This study was conducted for Northwestern University's Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research in the Spring of 1979. It gathered data for the Citizen Participation in Community Crime Prevention Project, directed by Paul J. Lavrakas and supported by the National Institute of Justice. Interviews were conducted by telephone in 1803 households scattered throughout the Chicago metropolitan region. The sample telephone numbers were generated at random by computer for prefixes serving the area. Approximately one-half of the respondents lived in the central city and one-half in the suburbs. This is one of the few crime-related surveys that includes a significant number of suburban respondents.

The questionnaire focused upon crime prevention behaviors, participation in community organizations and anti-crime campaigns, perceptions of the efficacy of prevention efforts, and people's experiences with crime. The data were used in the RTC report Coping With Crime to examine one politically important reaction to crime -- moving to the suburbs (46).

6. Census Bureau City Victimization Surveys. We employed surveys conducted by the Census Bureau for the Bureau of Justice Statistics in our study cities to examine the relationship between victimization and fear of crime (46). These surveys were conducted in 1974 and 1975. Only in the city victimization surveys did the Census Bureau administer an attitude questionnaire, and then only to those 16 years of age and older in a random half of the 10,000 households in each sample. These data are extremely important, for they are the only source of information on both attitudes and victimization which are drawn from samples large enough to produce useful data on the latter.

7. The General Social Survey. The General Social Survey has been conducted each Spring since 1973 by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. Each year about 1,500 respondents are questioned throughout the country in hour-long interviews. The survey is limited to English-speaking



persons (unlike the Northwestern survey, which also was conducted in Spanish), and to those 18 years of age and older. The survey's fear-of-crime item was asked in 1973, 1974, 1976 and 1977, yielding national data on about 6,000 persons.

Data from the General Social Survey were used to examine trends over time in fear of crime (45). They also were used in a validation study of survey measures of fear. While it has been argued that expressions of concern about crime are "code words" for the racial fears of white Americans, survey measures of racial intolerance proved to be unrelated to fear of crime (46).

The RTC Project Survey

The RTC Project's own survey was conducted jointly with another research project to gather information about the impact of crime on the lives of city dwellers. Both projects were concerned with how individuals attempt to reduce their chances of victimization by changing their behavior, and how neighbors organize to fight crime and reduce the fear of crime. The Reactions to Crime Project was interested in the impact of crime and neighborhood conditions on these concerns, while the Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research's Fear of Rape Project was concerned specifically with sexual assault and its consequences on the lives of women. The Rape Project was funded by the National Center for the Prevention and Control of Rape, a subdivision of the National Institute of Mental Health (40).

Both crime projects were multi-year efforts aimed at understanding how residents of urban communities cope with crime and its consequences. The design and content of the survey reflected that concern. A major component of the RTC Project's effort was a study of collective responses to crime -- how individuals band together to deal with crime problems. Both projects were interested in individual responses to crime (e.g., property marking, the installation of

locks and bars) and the impact of fear of crime on day-to-day behavior (e.g., shopping, recreational patterns). This led to the inclusion of a number of questions in the survey calling for self-reports of behavior. We wanted to know how people get their ideas about crime, so we asked whom they talk to and what they watch on television and read in the newspapers. Because we were interested in the neighborhood as a locus of action, we asked about events and conditions in the respondent's home area. There were several questions about people's relationships with their neighbors, and whom they knew and visited in the area. The survey questionnaire included a number of questions measuring respondents' perceptions of the extent of crime in their communities, whether they knew someone who had been a victim, and what they had done to reduce their chances of being victimized. Finally, there were a number of specific questions about sexual assault, some of which were asked only of women.

From the beginning, the RTC Project emphasized the neighborhood basis of individual and (especially) collective action. Thus, we needed to field a survey study of individual perceptions and actions which placed respondents within a known neighborhood nexis. Within each of the three cities under investigation -- San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Chicago -- the project gathered extensive data on three or four neighborhoods. The sampling frame for the survey thus had to yield respondents who lived within the boundaries of those areas. Those boundaries were determined by the perceptions of area residents interviewed during the fieldwork phase of the project, and were not drawn to match any convenient, preexisting geographical subunits. Further, because we wished to use the survey data to characterize those neighborhoods, we had to gather data on large samples of respondents in each area. Finally, the neighborhoods themselves were chosen on the basis of their characteristic class and racial status, their crime rate, and upon the apparent level of organizational activity there. They were not chosen to be representative of



the cities in which they were located, or of urban neighborhoods generally. Therefore, we also fielded a modest city-wide survey of residents of each of the three communities. Those data can be utilized to place our target neighborhoods within the broader context of each city.

The Rape Project component of the enterprise also imposed an important substantive demand upon the survey: a focus upon women. While the Rape Project required comparative attitudinal data for males, many of its interests were female-specific. It was interested in the way in which women alter their lifestyles to reduce their chances of rape victimization, their perceptions of their risks under certain circumstances, and the impact of rape upon their relationships with others. It thus was necessary to oversample women in order to produce enough female respondents to meet the goals of the project.

The substantive demands of the RTC and Fear of Rape Projects thus imposed several important methodological and procedural constraints upon the design of the survey. These included the sample sizes required, their concentration in numerous and small geographical areas, the multi-city focus of the projects, the large female contingent to be interviewed, and our interest in infrequent events, including the sensitive issue of sexual assault. Further, several of our neighborhoods housed large Spanish-speaking populations, some of whom are reputed to be undocumented aliens, and others were relatively disorganized places characterized by high residential mobility. The high crime rate in several of them also affected decisions about interviewing, for interviewer safety and interview quality both are reduced by untoward environmental conditions. Finally, the budget was (like all budgets) limited, and we could do only what we could afford.

One of the most important decisions to be made about the survey was the mode of data collection: personal interviews or interviews gathered over the telephone. While there may be some dispute over the relative validity of data

gathered through telephone interviews, there is firm evidence that such information is as technically reliable as that collected in person. Data on the incidence of telephone usership and telephone and personal-interview refusal rates in big cities indicate telephone-based random-digit-dialing sampling frames and interviewing procedures do not produce substantial unique biases if we accept in-person interviews with persons selected in more traditional ways as the criterion. Experts suggested that surveys conducted over the phone should cost only 30% as much as in-person interviews.

The survey was carried out by the Market Opinion Research Corporation between October and December, 1977. Questionnaire preparation and initial pretesting, along with all sampling, was conducted at Northwestern University. The city-wide component of the survey was designed to reach randomly selected adults in 540 households in each city. In addition, interviews were to be conducted with residents in ten selected neighborhoods, four in Chicago and three in each of the other cities. The neighborhood samples were to range in size from 200 (in four of the sites) to 450 (in six areas).

Respondents were reached via computer-generated random telephone numbers. Each number was called from a randomly ordered list, and was recalled if necessary. Some could be dropped from the sample immediately, for they proved to be nonworking numbers; others had to be dialed several times before anyone answered, and even then the household member randomly selected for interviewing often had to be called again.

The use of random digit dialing in conjunction with geographical screening questions to reach households in selected areas was one of the major features of this survey. The first responsible person reached by each call (the "household informant") was asked a brief series of screening questions to insure that the number served a residence and the household was located in the central city (for the city-wide samples) or in the proper neighborhood. The telephone number



sample for the neighborhood surveys was designed to maximize the "hit rate" for those areas.

Data from this survey were analyzed in each of the reports issued by the project. The raw data and control cards for processing it have been deposited in the Criminal Justice Data Archive at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan. A detailed report (41) on the procedures used to collect the data is included with the survey documentation.

The RTC survey has been put to a number of uses, including:

- ° methodological studies of the measurement of perceptions of crime and neighborhood conditions (24), and individual and household crime-prevention behaviors (23, 25);
- ° a detailed investigation of the generalizability of models of individual fear and behavior to different neighborhood contexts (3);
- ° Congressional testimony about fear of crime among the urban elderly (43), and studies of women's fears and crime-prevention behavior (38, 40);
- ° a study of patterns of community attachment and social interaction (39);
- ° an examination of people's beliefs about the efficacy of restrictive vs. assertive actions to prevent sexual assault (37);
- ° analyses of the impact of neighborhood conditions and crime patterns (29) and the media (47) on fear;
- ° documentation of the correlates of citizen participation in crime prevention activities (9).

Field Research

From June 1976 to September 1977, fieldwork was undertaken in 10 neighborhoods in Chicago, San Francisco, and Philadelphia. This effort resulted in

nearly 10,000 pages of field records. These data consist of notes based upon formal and informal interviews with community group leaders, organizers, and members, as well as the police, local officials, merchants and other area residents. The notes also contain observations of the physical environment of the neighborhood, community organization meetings, and other activities. The initial goal of the fieldwork was to assist in selecting neighborhoods for more extensive analysis, and to draw definitions of those communities which corresponded to citizens' perceptions and local political realities. This effort was begun by asking a variety of people what they considered their neighborhood boundaries to be. After defining neighborhood boundaries, the field-workers worked intensively to develop community profiles of the areas. They included the following information:

- general problems in the neighborhood
- crime-related problems
- people's "mental maps" of safe and dangerous areas there
- identification of opinion leaders
- identification of general and crime-specific community organizations
- assessment of community relations with the police.

Several different interview methods, ranging from notes about casual conversations with people on the street through more formal interviews with systematically selected respondents and community leaders, were exploited to gain information. Special efforts were made to seek out community leaders and other influential residents. Field-workers also attended meetings of local organizations and collected a series of unobtrusive indicators relating to the physical and social organization characteristics of the neighborhoods, demographic changes, patterns of street use, and more detailed information about local crime problems. Field-workers sought to identify crime issues as defined by



local residents, and to determine which individual and group actors were involved in those issues. The outcome of these field activities was a vast collection of information which provided in-depth, street-level knowledge about the study of neighborhoods.

One or more field researchers were assigned to each site. The assignment of an individual to a site for an extended period allowed for the development of rapport between the researcher and the community. This often leads to more honest answers from informants and access to otherwise unavailable data. The field-workers were supervised by a city director, and occasional site visits were conducted by senior research personnel.

The result of each field-worker's daily rounds was a set of field notes. These recorded the issues and answers explored in the day's interviews and observations. Originally either handwritten or recorded, they were transcribed into typewritten form for subsequent analysis. This analysis was facilitated by the development of an indexing scheme which enabled others to locate material in each field-worker's reports pertinent to different topics. Each of the nearly 10,000 typewritten pages of field notes was examined, and codes were assigned to it which described the topics discussed on the page. There were 70 topical index codes, arranged under such subheadings as "meetings," "interviews," "community organizations," "crime," and "victimization experiences." Each page of field notes was assigned a unique number, and a retrieval system was developed which enabled a user to quickly retrieve all of the pages referring to a particular issue. For example, descriptions of what took place at meetings of community organizations in which crime issues were discussed in a particular neighborhood could be assembled with relative ease.

The field research in particular added to our research on collective responses to crime. The bulk of this work is reported in two books by Aaron Podolefsky and Fredric DuBow, Strategies for Community Crime Prevention (35)

and Case Studies in Community Crime Prevention (36). In this research, the unit of analysis was the site, a geographically or territorially defined area. Under these circumstances, in contrast to research in which investigators are sent scurrying across the city in search of the lone interview, most of the field-worker's time is spent in data collection rather than travel. Indeed, some field-workers actually moved into their sites and gained an "insider's" perspective on them to a greater degree than is frequently found in social research.

One of the unique qualities of field research is its openness to unanticipated phenomena and its flexibility in allowing the field researcher to follow up and probe into areas of interest which arise spontaneously. For this reason, we consciously approached the field notes as exploratory data, with an eye to hypothesis generation and discovery. While we began with certain conceptualizations of the issues at hand, preliminary analyses often forced us to re-evaluate some of our most basic notions about the phenomena under investigation. For example, Kidder and Cohn (20) used notes on conversations with ordinary citizens about crime to discover what they believed about the causes of crime, and how that related to what they did about the problem. They found people talk about community, and social causes of crime, but by-and-large they act only to prevent their own victimization. Things people do about crime do not address what they believe to be the cause of their condition. Many of the insights which have been gained during the course of this research are a direct result of the flexibility of the field research format.

Another advantage of field research is the direct observation of behaviors and conditions it entails. People do not behave in the fashion they say they do, and conditions are not always as people perceive them to be. Survey questions may ask about vandalism, but observation allows one to make an assessment of the nature of the incident. Graffiti in Philadelphia, for example, primarily



take the form of individual names, while in Chicago gang names are used as symbols of turf identification. This is a potentially important difference in understanding people's reactions to and concerns about vandalism as an indicator of social disorder in the neighborhood. With regard to collective responses, we found that at times groups with memberships "in the hundreds" had an average of only 10 or fewer persons attending their monthly meetings. Moreover, open-ended interviews with community organization staff members allowed us to appreciate their view of the role of groups in dealing with the social problems, of which crime is one, which confront the neighborhood.

Finally, and possibly most importantly intensive field research helps overcome the inability of random-sample survey techniques to locate an adequate sample of individuals who participated in collective responses to crime at the neighborhood level. In the pooled city-wide sample surveys, approximately 10% of respondents had participated in a collective response to crime. In some neighborhoods, however, as few as 4%, or 13 people, report having participated. The level of detail about events that can be reliably gathered through those interviews was very low as a consequence.

The limitations of field research are well-known. There are certainly difficulties with cross-site comparisons and with replicating the findings. For field research, the multisite, large-scale character of the project produced identifiable tensions in central control and planning versus individual autonomy. Given the multisite design -- where sites were picked precisely because they exemplified variation -- it was expected field researchers would display autonomy in pursuing substantive issues which were significant for understanding crime and residents' reactions to it within a given site, even though it might not be a focus of concern within any of the other sites. For example, only in Wicker Park, in Chicago, did the issue of arson emerge as a focus of field research.

The obverse of this autonomy is the desire for central control over data collection, so that similar data is generated for comparative purposes across sites. In this sense, the fieldwork for this project was a significant and unique departure from most field research because different people participated in data gathering and its analysis. Field research, in contrast to survey and especially experimental research, usually involves an interplay between data gathering and analysis. The formulation of hypotheses, following them up with further observations, and refining the hypotheses in the light of new data, was difficult to coordinate on a large scale. Information would be lost in transmission both up and down organizational levels, and the time delay in transmission often produced discontinuities in both data-gathering and analytic activities. The central research staff had to pore through copious field notes being shipped weekly to the central offices and compare findings from 10 different sites. Our search for common threads across communities, while still being true to the uniqueness of each site, produced shifting directives, so that field researchers in the sites were encouraged to make autonomous field decisions while at the same time receiving directives to investigate particular phenomena. For the central analytical staff, the process was equally frustrating given a lack of first-hand involvement within the settings. For them, the dilemmas were similar to those encountered when doing secondary analysis of other researchers' data.

Newspaper Analysis

An early project interest in the sources of people's perceptions of crime -- and the frequent assertion of community residents interviewed during the participant observation phase that they learn about crime from the papers -- prompted a systematic content analysis of crime news in the major daily newspapers published in Philadelphia, Chicago and San Francisco.



Content analysis is a useful tool for determining factual and stylistic content of different media sources. It can be performed on print and electronic media. The presentation of crime and violence has been a popular topic for content analyses of television programs, especially for those frequently viewed by children. It also has been used extensively for examining the content of newspapers, television newscasts and a wide range of prime-time television dramas. While many researchers have investigated factual content as well as space and time devoted to crime in newspapers and on television, this work has traditionally focused on the amount of time or space or the numbers of violent incidents, rather than the style of presentation. The content analysis conducted in conjunction with this project was done both to determine the overall parameters of crime coverage and the factual details presented in stories in headlines as they relate to style of crime presentation in the metropolitan dailies in the three major urban centers in this study.

A pretest of selected issues of newspapers indicated that approximately half of the crime stories in these newspapers were about violent crime. Since our resources for this aspect of the project were extremely limited, and because we thought violent crime stories were more likely than nonviolent stories to affect fear, we limited our analyses to violent crime stories. Included, therefore, in the analysis were articles about specific violent crime incidents, trials resulting from violent crimes, crime prevention programs geared toward violent crime, and general articles about violent crime. The analysis involved examination of all articles about violent crime that appeared in the Chicago Sun-Times, Daily News (through its demise on March 4, 1978), and Tribune, the Philadelphia Inquirer, Daily News, and Bulletin, and the San Francisco Chronicle and Examiner between November 1, 1977 and April 30, 1978. (The first three months of this period corresponded to the field period for our telephone interviews with 5121 residents in the three cities; the entire six-month period

coincided with the data-collection period for the in-person interviews being conducted by the Rape Project.)

Approximately 11,000 articles about violent crime appeared in the 1,450 issues of the eight newspapers during the six months covered by this content analysis. Nearly 3,000 of these stories were reports of crimes occurring in foreign countries and were therefore omitted from the analyses reported here. Each of the remaining 8,000 articles was coded for 82 variables, including space and locator variables (the staple for most newspaper content analyses of crime presentation), victim variables, suspect variables, general crime variables, newspaper issue variables, and style variables. The space and locator variables include the amount of space in square inches given to text, graphics, and headlines, the page on which the article appeared, the location of the article on the page, and the type-point size of the headline in picas. The victim variables include such details as age, sex, occupation, race, address, and appearance of the victim. The suspect variables include the age, sex, occupation, race, address, and prior record of the suspect. The general crime variables include the location, time of day presence or absence of a weapon, relationship between victim and suspect, motives triggering incidents, and, of course, the type of crime. Newspaper issue variables include the number of pages in the issue, the number of pages of advertising in the issue, the page size, and the first page lead story categories.

Training sessions with approximately 45 student analysts included discussion of each variable to assure uniform decision-making, to clarify categories (e.g., of crimes), and to explain and identify indicators of journalistic style.

As with any content analysis, the validity and reliability of our measures rely in large part on the extent to which we succeeded in making our response categories mutually exclusive and exhaustive. This is particularly difficult in a content analysis with this amount of detail, since finer discriminations



are particularly hard to define and delineate adequately. Content analysis of crime news is further complicated by the fact that, while mutual exclusivity and exhaustiveness are criteria for good content analysis, they are not requirements for the commission of crimes. Since criminals tend not to commit acts which fall into nice, neat categories, multiple crimes are extremely prevalent, a fact that we dealt with by coding up to two crimes for each article, with the first crime coded being the more serious offense. Our content analysis was complicated even further by presentational style; newspapers often report crimes in bunches, joining vaguely related or even totally unrelated crimes in one roundup article. If the crimes reported in an article dealt with the same type of criminal act, they were combined and coded as one article. If the crimes were totally unrelated, the article was coded as two articles, with the text, headline, and graphic measurements divided proportionately between them. Fortunately, this sort of division was necessary very rarely.

Even deciding whether or not an article concerned a crime was sometimes difficult. For example, an article about an on-duty police officer killing someone in the line of duty was not coded as a crime if the act was presented as being totally justified and reasonable. Similarly, an exorcism in which someone was whipped or tied down was not coded if it was not being dealt with as a crime by the law enforcement officials. Any instance in which criminal charges or investigations were mentioned was coded as a crime, however. Other cases were more difficult to resolve on the basis of hard and fast guidelines. Purse-snatching is a crime, but what if the suspect is a dog? (We didn't code it.) Kidnapping is a crime, but what if someone claimed to have been kidnapped by little green things in a spacecraft? (We didn't code it, largely because the suspect variables would have been impossible to code.) Stealing a thing is a theft, while stealing a person is kidnapping, but what is stealing Charlie Chaplin's corpse? (We coded it "theft".) Quotations in crime articles can

come from victims, suspects, authorities, or "others," but who is the source when a dead woman speaks through a total stranger and gives information that leads to the arrest of her murderer? (We coded it "other".)

Another problem that we faced in our content analysis was the frequent appearance of crime facts that didn't fit our predetermined categories, leading to frequent use of the "other" category. For example, weapons used in the articles we coded included tarantulas, bathtubs, nylon stockings, placards, bananas (used to rob a bank), hand grenades, poison, axes, bombs, bats, fire, ropes, hatchets, hand (karate), cars, airplanes, toy guns, screwdrivers, and snakes.

Beyond crime facts that didn't fit our categories, we also had to have rules to determine which of the plethora of facts should be coded. For example, the variable "location of crime" can be coded "victim's home, suspect's home, car, street, park, restaurant, etc." (21 categories in all). In one crime article, a man was standing near the window of his second-story apartment when someone who was in the park across the street shot him, whereupon he fell out the window and landed on a parked car below, finally falling onto the sidewalk. What exactly is the location of that crime? Or, as in the Patty Hearst case, someone is kidnapped from her home, put into a car, and taken to a hideout. We solved these problems by coding the location as the location of the victim at the inception of the crime.

And finally there is the problem of determining who exactly the victim is. The most convoluted of these crimes involved a man who was arrested, convicted, and imprisoned, who then escaped and hijacked an airplane to Havana, where he was arrested for murder and while in jail awaiting trial was beaten to death by a jail guard, who was being investigated in connection with the incident. (We will leave it to the reader to decide who the victim is in this case.)

The bridge between content analysis as an art (as outlined above) and



content analysis as science was provided by Coding Supervisors who trained the coding staff, oversaw all coding sessions, verified coded articles, retained coders as necessary, and made decisions on all cases that defied decision-making. The two Coding Supervisors were virtually unanimous on the decisions they reached on judgments calls (including the judgments on the convoluted cases mentioned above). Because of the elaborate decision rules and documentation developed before the content analysis began and the referral of decisions falling outside the decision rules to the Coding Supervisors, the newspaper crime articles were able to be coded with a great deal of consistency.

One use of these data was to characterize the "crime environment" surrounding our survey respondents during the period in which interviews were being conducted. In these eight papers, readers could find an average of almost six stories about violent crime each day, including three murders and at least one robbery or assault. There was no issue of any paper that did not include at least one such story. Not surprisingly, the three-city survey found that more than three-quarters of those questioned recalled reading about a crime story or seeing one on television the previous day.

In addition, the data enabled us to compare the substantive content of newspaper crime coverage with the images of crime people hold. Not surprisingly, in our survey most people recalled stories about violent crime and half described a murder. The profile of "memorable" crimes does not match the true distribution of victimization, but it does closely resemble the portrait of crime drawn by the media. Since the newspapers often report the rarer, more serious and more bizarre crimes (because they are seen as more newsworthy and as more interesting to readers), they are, in fact, portraying a misleading picture of crime. Since people know the papers do not report all the crimes committed, it is also not surprising that 60% of respondents think crime is more serious than reported by the media.

Analyses of the relationship between the crime content of newspapers and readers' fear indicate that, within cities, readers of newspapers with a greater proportion of space devoted to violent crime exhibit more fear than readers of competitive papers, and that those readers are more likely to cite crime as the most serious problem facing the community.

These and other content analysis data, together with an analysis of the advantages of crime stories for the newspaper industry, appear in "The News Business, Crime and Public Fear," (13) and Crime in the Papers, Fear in the Streets (14) both by Margaret T. Gordon and Linda Heath.



## Recommendations for Future Research

The work of the RTC Project is concluded. However, our findings recommend further research in several key areas.

1. Over-Time Studies. The surveys conducted for the RTC Project were cross-sectional, one-shot-in-time studies. There are a number of reasons why they are of limited utility for answering some important research questions. First, they cannot deal with trends. During the 1960s and 1970s both crime and fear rose sharply, and there was some evidence that not all population groups shared equally in the new burdens this constituted. Fear in particular seems to have risen more sharply among the elderly (8) and in big cities. There are also important hypotheses about trends which need to be evaluated, including the proposition that changes in the amount of crime are more influential than sheer levels of crime in creating fear. Part of our research effort consisted of reviewing past studies of crime and fear and examining the results of polls (4), but the secondary examination of existing public opinion poll data cannot substitute for well-designed over-time studies.

Even more important is the need for survey panel studies to track the course of individual experiences, opinion, and behavior across time. For example, we currently do not know much about the effect of victimization upon behavior. The problem is that victim surveys gather reports of past experiences, while routine behaviors can be accurately measured only for brief and recent periods of time. Thus, without a "pretest" to establish previctimization levels of fear and crime-related activity we cannot definitively assess the impact of subsequent experiences with crime on victims.

2. Experiments. Research on the effects of media on fear cannot be conducted without the use of true experiments. It is widely believed that exposure to crime fiction and news on television and in the print media

generates fear of crime. The difficulty in evaluating the claim is that media attentiveness involves self selection into "treatment" and "control" groups. There are many differences between watchers or readers and others in addition to their exposure to crime stories which may account for their level of fear (46). Analyses of survey data using statistical controls to "equate" groups on those other factors are inevitably unsatisfactory, and will produce seemingly contradictory findings due to measurement error and differences in model specification. Only experiments can speak definitively to the issue.

3. Contextual Analysis. There needs to be more analysis of formal contextual models of individual reactions to crime. Contextual models combine individual and (in this case) neighborhood-level data to examine the impact of each. For example, the Conklin-Durkheim debate -- whether neighborhood crime stimulates or inhibits individual crime prevention activity -- involves factors which need to be measured at more than one level and combined to speak to the issue. Much of the RTC project's efforts were focused upon the question of whether neighborhood organization and activity affected individual confidence in the community and action against crime. A great deal of social action theory also depends upon the specific linkages between these two factors. This is a research question which demands a great deal of new data on individuals and their neighborhoods, spread across a number of different contextual areas.

4. Macro-Level Evaluation. Finally, recommendations which could be made on the basis of work like that of RTC project are limited by our lack of clear knowledge about the relationship between individual and collective prevention efforts and the crime rate of a neighborhood. Surprisingly, we do not even know if widespread target-hardening programs will actually reduce burglary in a community, or if citizen patrols, neighborhood watch programs and other



group activities actually can deter personal or property crime. Without reliable knowledge about the consequences of various crime prevention strategies it is premature to recommend diverting community energies into those rather than other worthy but non-crime-related efforts. We also lack the knowledge necessary to account for the costs and benefits of such activities. What is required is a careful reevaluation of the existing literature on crime prevention with an eye toward identifying reliable evidence concerning program effects. Then, a careful program of research monitoring the influence of demonstration program packages could be fielded. If their results were positive government agencies would be in a stronger position to advocate particular programs and policies at the community level.

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