

Community Crime Prevention: An Analysis of a Developing Strategy

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Crime prevention strategies often aim at changing the motivations and predispositions of offenders. A new approach has developed within the last decade which focuses on changing the behavior of potential victims. The authors explore the theoretical foundations of the new strategies for reducing crime, commonly known as community crime prevention. They suggest that the innovation is a result of a major shift in the research paradigm for studying the effects of crime.

The orientation underlying community crime prevention is labeled the "victimization perspective." Following a description of some limitations in that perspective, the authors offer, as an alternative, a perspective oriented toward social control. The social control perspective, which is based on the empirical findings of several recently completed research projects, offers a theoretical foundation both for a fresh approach to the study of the effects of crime and for the development of policies for community crime prevention.

Crime prevention for the first three-quarters of the twentieth century was premised on a set of principles that changed very little. Preventing crime meant modifying the predisposition of offenders to commit illegal acts. Whether they concentrated on altering the environmental factors that influence offenders or on working directly with offenders in a therapeutic setting, most prevention strategies since the emergence of the Progressive Era sought to prevent crime by changing the victimizers. Those strategies, however, came under attack in the late 1960s. Critics noted the increasing crime rates as evidence that nothing appeared to work in preventing crime. As a consequence, many of the then-current prevention strategies fell into disrepute. The 1970s saw a change in the

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orientation of those concerned about crime prevention and crime control with the potential for significantly modifying social reform in America. Exemplified in the *community crime prevention* approach, the new orientation shifts the locus of attention from potential offenders and their motivations to potential victims and their environment. The rationale for this approach is summed up in the Hartford Crime Prevention Program.

1. The crime rate in a residential neighborhood is a product of the linkage between offender motivation and the opportunities provided by the residents, users, and environmental features of that neighborhood.
2. The crime rate for a specific offense can be reduced by lessening the opportunities for that crime to occur.
3. Opportunities can be reduced by: (a) Altering the physical aspects of buildings and streets to increase surveillance capabilities and lessen target/victim vulnerability, to increase the neighborhood's attractiveness to residents, and to decrease its fear-producing features; (b) Increasing citizen concerns about and involvement in crime prevention and the neighborhood in general; and (c) Utilizing the police to support the above.
4. Opportunity-reducing activities will lead not only to a reduction in the crime rate but also to a reduction in fear of crime. The reduced crime and fear will mutually reinforce each other, leading to still further reductions in both.¹

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. Prevention in this new formulation is based on a theory of crime causation that signifies a radical departure from the motivational and socialization theories that dominated American criminology and crime prevention over the last half century. Crime is to be prevented, not by changing perpetrators, but rather by educating potential victims and thus limiting the opportunities for victimization.

This shift in conceptions of crime prevention grew out of research that focused on the victim rather than the offender. The authors of this literature, funded by the National Commission on Crime and the Administration of Justice, attempted to determine both the level of crime and the level of fear Americans were experiencing.² In recognition of its emphasis, we

1. Brian Hollander et al., *Reducing Residential Crime and Fear: The Hartford Neighborhood Crime Prevention Program: Executive Summary* (Washington, D.C.: Dept. of Justice, February 1980), p. 2.

2. Albert J. Reiss, Jr., *Studies in Crime and Law Enforcement in Major Metropolitan Areas, Field Survey III, Vol. 1* (Washington, D.C.: Govt. Printing Office, 1967); Albert D. Biderman et al., *Report on a Pilot Study in the District of Columbia on Victimization and Attitudes toward Law Enforcement* (Washington, D.C.: Govt. Printing Office, 1967); Philip H. Ennis, *Criminal Victimization in the United States: A Report of a National Survey* (Washington, D.C.: Govt. Printing Office, 1967).

have labeled this orientation the "victimization perspective." The perspective has served as a conceptual framework for much research and policy of the past decade, and has had considerable effects on the writings and programs produced. In exploring that influence in the first section of the article, we will argue that there are inherent limitations in the framework that both constrain the focus of the research and explain the programmatic weaknesses of the policies it has spawned. The policy and conceptual weaknesses are addressed in an alternative framework, the "social control perspective," which we describe in the concluding section. There is much of value in the community crime prevention strategy; with the proper modifications, efforts of this type can greatly enhance the community's capacity to prevent crime.

THE VICTIMIZATION PERSPECTIVE

A shift in methodology reflected in the victimization perspective heralded a change in definition. Crimes, which until these studies were conducted had been conceived of as *acts* committed by offenders, were now defined as *events* in which offenders and victims participated. The structural characteristics of these events, in terms of time and space, became the variables that could account for them.

The notion of crime as event rather than act has important implications. Events shape the social world; as the events cluster in time and space, they have far-reaching consequences for those people who experience them. Victimization is an event that affects people and is important to that extent. Acts, on the other hand, are the behaviors of individuals. Predicting an act is a function of explaining what motivates or shapes the behavior of the actor, while predicting an event entails assessing the relative importance of the significant factors that constitute the event. Furthermore, events shape the behaviors of those who experience them. Fear of crime, according to the victimization perspective, is a consequence of experiencing or anticipating victimization.³ The study of fear of crime, however, illustrates most vividly the limitations of that perspective.

Albert Biderman et al., Albert Reiss, and Philip Ennis all administered surveys designed to measure the amount of fear reported by respondents.⁴ Fear, although measured differently in each survey, was implicitly defined as anticipation of the occurrence of a crime event. When anticipation was high, fear, by definition, was high as well. An increase in crime was assumed to generate an increase in fear. In taking as their task

3. Dan A. Lewis and Greta Salem, *Crime and the Urban Community* (Evanston, Ill.: Center for Urban Affairs, Northwestern University, 1980).

4. Biderman et al., *Report on a Pilot Study in the District of Columbia*; Reiss, *Studies in Crime and Law Enforcement in Major Metropolitan Areas*; Ennis, *Criminal Victimization in the United States*.

documenting the level of fear among respondents, all three researchers assumed that fear was related to the amount of crime to which respondents were exposed. Indeed, given the measures employed by the scholars, it would have been impossible to dissociate fear of crime from the anticipated crime events. For example, Biderman et al. measured "fear of personal attack" by one item:

Would you say there has been an increase in violent crime here in Washington? I mean attacks on people—like shootings, stabbings and rapes? Would you say that there's now very much more of this sort of thing, just a little bit more, not much difference, or that there is no more than five years ago?⁵

To report an increase in violent crime events is to score high on fear of crime (or, in this case, attack). Reiss, while avoiding a direct discussion of fear, subsumed the topic in a more general discussion of "citizen perceptions about crime in their areas." Here again, anticipation of the crime event was synonymous with fear:

When you think about your chances of getting robbed, threatened, beaten up, or anything of that sort, would you say your neighborhood is (compared to other neighborhoods in town): very safe, above average, less safe, or one of the worst?

In what ways have you changed your habits because of fear of crime? (stay off streets, use taxis or cars, avoid being taken out, don't talk to strangers)⁶

Both Ennis and Biderman et al. developed measures of fear premised on the imputed relationship between a dangerous neighborhood and the level of fear among individuals in that neighborhood. Biderman et al. called this measure an "index of anxiety," and it comprised the following items:

1. What is it about the neighborhood that was most important? [This was asked only of those residents who indicated the neighborhood was more important than the house in selecting their present residence.] (Safety or moral characteristics, convenience or aesthetic characteristics)

2. When you think about the chances of getting beaten up would you say this neighborhood is very safe, about average, less safe than most, one of the worst?

3. Is there so much trouble that you would move if you could? [Again, a screen question asked only of those who did not say their neighborhood was very safe.]

4. Are most of your neighbors quiet or are there some who create disturbances? (All quiet, few disturbances, many disturbances)

5. Biderman et al., *Report on a Pilot Study in the District of Columbia*, p. 132; see also Appendix D, p. 11.

6. Reiss, *Studies in Crime and Law Enforcement in Major Metropolitan Areas*, pp. 4, 35 (App. A).

5. Do you think that crime has been getting better or worse here in Washington during the past year? (Better, worse, same)⁷

Ennis distinguished between "fear of crime" and "perception of risk." He measured fear by the following items:

1. How safe do you feel walking alone in your neighborhood during the day?
2. How safe do you feel walking alone in your neighborhood after dark?
3. How often do you walk in your neighborhood after dark?
4. Have you wanted to go somewhere recently but stayed home because it was unsafe?
5. How concerned are you about having your house broken into?⁸

Risk was measured by two items:

1. How likely is it a person will be robbed or attacked on the streets around here? (Very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely)
2. Compared to other parts of this city (county) how likely is it that your home will be broken into? (Much more likely, somewhat more likely, somewhat less likely, much less likely, no real difference)⁹

Ennis distinguished between "feeling unsafe" (the report and assessment of the possibility that a crime will occur) and risk. But his fear measure seems as much an assessment of the neighborhood as it is a report on the respondent's sense of uneasiness.

As Terry Baumer has pointed out, there is little published information on how these early measures were developed,¹⁰ but for our purposes it is their content rather than their methodological limitations that is of interest. This early work assumes an association between the respondent's fear (as a reported internal state) and the number of victimizations the respondent anticipates. Fear is assumed to be a consequence of the potential for victimization; thus, the question facing the researcher is how that fear is distributed within a given population. The neighborhood is seen as a setting within which victimization takes place. If the respondent scores high as an *anticipator* of victimization, he is defined as fearful. A neighborhood is fear inducing to the extent that it provides a context for criminal activity. Thus, victimizations become the catalyst for fear; and this assumption limits the range of variables related to the fear-producing process. It is assumed that only crime causes fear. Fear, from this perspective, is a *consequence*, a *response* in time, of contact with crime events. If direct victimization fails to account for particularly high levels of fear,

7. Biderman et al., *Report on a Pilot Study in the District of Columbia*, p. 121.

8. Ennis, *Criminal Victimization in the United States*, pp. 72-75.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

10. Terry Baumer, "The Dimensions of Fear: A Preliminary Investigation" (Evanston, Ill.: Reactions to Crime Project, Center for Urban Affairs, Northwestern University).

then indirect contact, usually through the media or personal communication, is postulated as the mechanism through which the experience of crime has affected the respondent.

However, Ennis, Biderman et al., and Reiss, although focusing on different issues, all found that fear was not directly or straightforwardly related to the level of victimization. Although the amount of crime in an area generally predicted the level of fear among the area residents, there were enough anomalies in these findings to raise the question of what other factors besides the level of victimization affected the level of fear among respondents. Citizens least likely to be victimized (females and the elderly), for example, exhibited the highest levels of fear.¹¹ Furthermore, the relationship between victimization levels and citizens' assessments of the crime problem is inconsistent at best:

We have found that attitudes of citizens regarding crime are less affected by their past victimization than by their ideas about what is going on in their community—fears about a *weakening of social controls* on which they feel their safety and the broader fabric of social life is ultimately dependent.¹²

All of the factors discussed above—the ambiguous relationship between victimization and the fear of crime, the indications that crime is not generally perceived as an immediate threat, and the mixing of fear of crime with fear of strangers—point to the conclusion that what has been measured in research as the “fear of crime” is not simply fear of crime. Many of those involved in the study of the “fear of crime” probably recognize this conclusion, at least implicitly. But there are good reasons for making the conclusion explicit and exploring its ramifications.¹³

Crime and Community

When the victimization perspective is applied to the analysis of crime and community, other difficulties emerge. These are illustrated in John Conklin's study entitled the *Impact of Crime*.¹⁴ Rejecting Emile Durkheim's concept of the functionality of deviance in strengthening communities, Conklin argues that fear of crime robs citizens of the capacity to trust, isolates them, and thus contributes to the decline of community. Crime in this analysis is implicitly defined as the number of victimizations in the community:

11. Fay Lomax Cook and Thomas Cook, “Evaluating the Rhetoric of Crisis: A Case Study of Criminal Victimization of the Elderly” (Chicago, Ill.: School of Social Work, Loyola University).

12. Biderman et al., *Report on a Pilot Study in the District of Columbia*, p. 160.

13. James Garofalo and John Laub, “The Fear of Crime: Broadening Our Perspectives,” *Victimology*, vol. 3, nos. 3 and 4 (1978), pp. 242–53.

14. John E. Conklin, *The Impact of Crime* (New York: Macmillan, 1975).

Little of the material we have examined . . . suggests that Durkheim was correct in arguing that crime brings people together and strengthens social bonds. Instead, crime produces insecurity, distrust, and a negative view of the community. Although we lack conclusive evidence, crime also seems to reduce social interaction as fear and suspicion drive people apart. This produces a disorganized community that is unable to exercise informal social control over deviant behavior.¹⁵

This scenario is predicated on the notion that people react to crime as individuals. Rather than collectively sanctioning the criminal behavior, as Durkheim would anticipate, citizens react individually to fear and seek to protect themselves (e.g., buying guns and locks, not going out), thus breaking down community cohesion.

Conklin's discussion of community hinges on the distinction he makes between *individual* and *collective* responses to crime. The importance of these responses in turn stems from Conklin's use of the victimization perspective, for the logic of responding individually hinges on the salience of the victimization experience. Individual responses are assumed to be the normal reactions to the fear, or experience, of victimization. Thus, the conclusion that individual responses have negative consequences hinges on the imputed salience of victimization. Interestingly enough, this line of reasoning makes the *response* to victimization, rather than victimization itself, the central phenomenon. Conklin goes on to argue that when a community can respond collectively, crime does integrate:

Crime weakens the fabric of social life by increasing fear, suspicion, and distrust. It also reduces public support for the law, in terms of unwillingness to report crime and criticism of the police. However, under certain conditions people will engage in collective action to fight crime. They may work for a political candidate who promises to restore law and order. They may call meetings of community residents to plan an attack on crime. Sometimes they may even band together in a civilian police patrol to carry out the functions that the police are not effectively performing for them. Since people who perceive high crime rates often hold the police responsible for crime prevention, we would expect such patrols to emerge where people feel very threatened by crime, believe that the police cannot protect them, and think from past experience with community groups that the people themselves can solve the problem.¹⁶

The collective response, in terms of the victimization perspective, is an attempt to exert social control. Like fear, it is a *response* to crime, but when it will emerge and the shape it may assume in varying circumstances are left unspecified. Since crime and fear atomize communities, it is not at all clear when we should expect to see collective action develop, nor why

15. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

it emerges in some contexts but not in others. The victimization perspective describes the weakening of community solidarity as a *consequence* of crime and thus fear. The capacity of a community to exert social control is linked to the reduction of fear, as well as crime. The result is a strategy for crime prevention postulating that to build a community is to deter crime. This is the strategy currently referred to as community crime prevention.

Community crime prevention seeks to reduce the number of victimizations in a neighborhood by increasing the capacity of that neighborhood to respond collectively. This application of Durkheimian sociology to a new approach to studying crime (the victimization perspective) has resulted in several new crime prevention programs sponsored by federal agencies. The goal of increasing informal control through action by citizens is reminiscent of the activities derived from the social disorganization theories of the Chicago School of Sociology,¹⁷ with, however, a major difference in assumptions. The Chicago sociologists regarded social disorganization as the cause of local problems, which they sought to assuage with strategies designed to induce social cohesion. The community crime prevention programs define victimizations and their negative consequences (fear, isolation, and distrust) as the problem, and aim to induce cohesion by reducing crime.

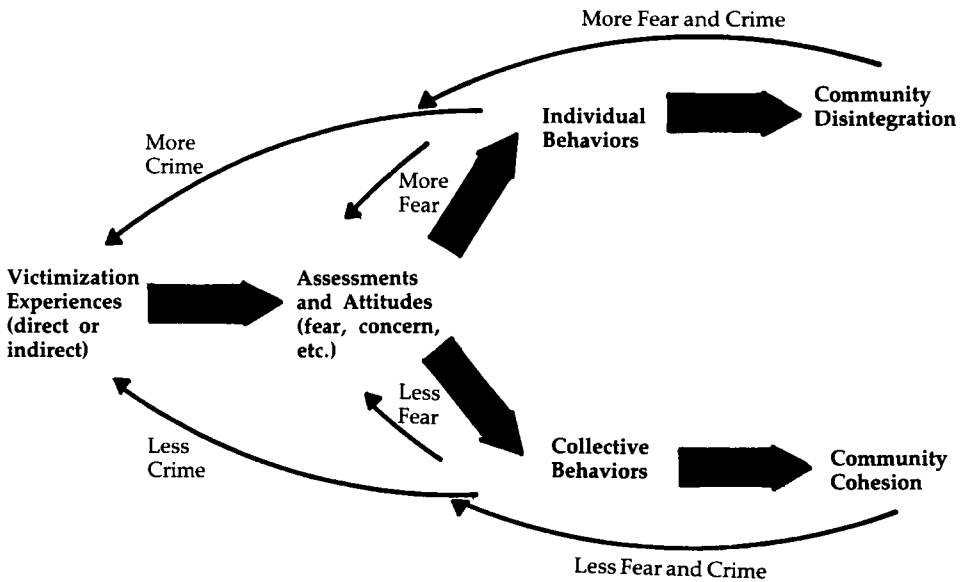
A Critique of Community Crime Prevention

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 victimizations, fear, and individual and collective responses that must be addressed. The victimization perspective posits the centrality of victimization events in community crime prevention. As individuals experience victimizations, they assess their risk as increased and their concerns rise. They react either individually, which is likely to increase their community's victimization level, or collectively with neighbors, which may reduce victimizations 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. The response rather than the crime itself becomes the focus of action. Thus, unlike the early reformers

17. James T. Carey, *Sociology and Public Affairs: The Chicago School* (London, England: Sage, 1975).

Figure 1. Community Crime Prevention Paradigm



who were concerned with the motivation of the offenders, the current crime prevention strategists emphasize the responses of the victims. In encouraging collective responses, they assume that crime (as defined by the victimization perspective) is the most potent force in inducing fear and that citizens can be educated to respond collectively rather than individually when the threat of crime impinges on a community.

However, a five-year study, *Reactions to Crime*, conducted at the Center for Urban Affairs, Northwestern University, has produced findings that suggest that citizens define the crime problem in ways that are inconsistent with the assumptions of the victimization approach and thus are unlikely to respond to appeals based on those definitions. These findings have led us to construct an alternative framework for analysis of crime and community, which we have labeled the "social control perspective." Analyses conducted within the framework of this perspective, we argue, make it possible both to define the problems and to devise crime prevention strategies to elicit involvement in ways that are more consistent with the perceptions and interests of the neighborhood residents who are expected to participate. We report the relevant findings and describe the conceptual framework below.

THE SOCIAL CONTROL PERSPECTIVE

Our examination of fear of crime in ten 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.¹⁸ Respondents questioned about crime problems described a range of what we have labeled "incivilities" as undesirable features of their communities—abandoned buildings, teenagers hanging around, illegal drug use, and vandalism.¹⁹ 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 the concerns appeared to be equally potent in generating fear of crime.²⁰

Furthermore, when asked what they were doing about crime in the neighborhood, 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, efforts to improve the neighborhood, to promote social integration, and to provide services for young people.²¹ Local residents see physical, social, and service improvements in their neighborhoods as effective crime prevention mechanisms (see Table 1).²² They recognize, as the victimization orientation does not, the importance of the community context in which events take place.

This was also underscored in our 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.²³ In seeking to account for such deviations, we again turned to contextual variables; we found that the 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

18. A more detailed discussion of the empirical data can be found in Lewis and Salem, *Crime and the Urban Community*.

19. Dan A. Lewis and Michael G. Maxfield, "Fear in the Neighborhoods: An Investigation of the Impact of Crime in Chicago," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, July 1980, pp. 160-89.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Paul J. Lavrakas et al., *Factors Related to Citizen Involvement in Personal, Household and Neighborhood Anti-Crime Measures* (Evanston, Ill.: Center for Urban Affairs, Northwestern University, 1980).

22. Aaron Podolefsky and Frederic Dubow, *Strategies for Community Crime Prevention* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C Thomas, forthcoming).

23. Lewis and Salem, *Crime and the Urban Community*.

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.²⁴

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 fear-producing conditions and subsequent expressions of fear, and in community 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 Aaron Podolefsky and Frederic Dubow's analysis of collective responses to crime.²⁵ They found that 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.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Podolefsky and Dubow, *Strategies for Community Crime Control*.

Table 1. *Collective Anticrime Activities^a*

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Activities</i>	<i>Category Percentage</i>
Surveillance		13.54
Radio patrols	4.76	
Walking patrols (dog patrols)	4.55	
Tenant patrols	.11	
Neighborhood surveillance	4.12	
Protective behavior		8.57
Escorts, people with dogs walk together	.21	
Carry signalling devices, whistlestop	5.07	
Provide advice about home security	1.27	
Engrave objects (Operation ID)	.74	
Hire private police	.74	
Rent strike until safety of building improved	.11	
Anti- arson efforts	.32	
Stop muggings of elderly	.11	
Police/Criminal justice oriented		16.18
Pressure on police about policy	5.92	
Assist police	.74	
End police brutality	.11	
Encourage crime reporting	1.27	
Go to court to testify (about neighborhood kids)	.21	
Meet with or pressure public officials about crime	2.33	
Meet with police	5.60	
Promote awareness of crime		5.39
Promote awareness of crime	5.39	
Sanctions/Informal social control		1.48
Get rid of drug pushers, addicts, drunks	.53	
Talk to neighbors about crime problems	.42	
Get rid or stop introduction of pool halls, porno shops, halfway houses	.32	
Get rid of troublesome families	.21	
Improve or maintain the neighborhood		11.53
Improve or clean up neighborhood, property, buildings	8.25	
Street light programs	1.80	
Traffic control, speed bumps, stop signs	.95	
Get graffiti off walls	.11	
Reduce vandalism	.42	
Youth oriented		19.90
Provide positive youth activities	14.06	
Youth social control (off streets, out of trouble)	1.27	
Counseling kids	.74	
Dealing with juvenile delinquency	.63	

Table 1. *con't.*

Teach children right and wrong—law	.74	
Parents work with kids	.95	
Deal with gang problems	1.48	
Promote social integration		7.99
Organize the neighborhood	4.60	
Look out for each other	1.80	
Develop community interest, get acquainted	1.59	
Provide general services		2.12
Help old people, people with problems	1.80	
Assist victims	.21	
Represent accused	.11	
Meetings		9.09
Hold meetings and discuss crime (often with police speaker)	9.09	
Miscellaneous		
Counsel or settle disputes	.42	
Strengthen families	.11	
Stop TV violence	.11	
Vague	1.06	

^a_n = 946 activities.

Source: Podolefsky and Dubow, *Strategies for Community Crime Control*.

Furthermore, there is no systematic evidence that an individual's attitude toward crime is associated with participation in collective responses. Paul Lavrakas and his coauthors found no relationship between perceptions of crime in the neighborhood and collective participation in crime prevention activities,²⁶ nor did Podolefsky and Dubow find a connection between crime concerns and such participation.²⁷ Communities with higher concerns about robbery or 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. 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).

The theoretical underpinnings of the social control framework for the study of crime and community come from the Chicago School's orientation to the study of the city and community life. These theorists found an explanation for the distribution of crime and delinquency (and other

26. Lavrakas et al., *Factors Related to Citizen Involvement*.

27. Podolefsky and Dubow, *Strategies for Community Crime Control*.

forms of deviance) in what they saw as the disruptive effects of city life.²⁸ They argued that the changes induced by industrialization and the growth of urban populations led to social disorganization, which reflected the growing inability of the local urban community to regulate itself. Thus, crime and other forms of deviance were a product of local institutions' inability to exert social control, that is, to regulate the activities of residents.

In similar fashion, the social control perspective is based on the assumption that fear of crime is a problem in communities that do not have the capacity to regulate themselves. Fear is induced not only by crime, but also by many other signs of social disorganization that indicate to residents that their community is changing in threatening ways. The ability of local institutions to resist the disorganization process is a function of their capacity to assert the legitimacy of local standards and to affect those activities inside the neighborhood contributing to the disorganization process. When a community cannot assert its values, its residents become fearful. The social control perspective treats fear of crime as a reaction to the decline of a local area. Those who are fearful may in fact see that their risk of victimization is increasing, but they see this as a consequence of the moral decay of their community brought about by the invasion of forces viewed as disruptive to the social order. As these increase in number, fear increases.

Two factors mediate this relationship between fear and social disorganization. The first is political and refers to what Gerald Suttles has labeled *provincialism*.²⁹ Neighborhoods with a high degree of provincialism have the capacity to regulate the movement of populations and the use of land and to generate effective action by municipal agencies (i.e., building and sanitation departments). This capacity is especially effective in reducing fear when it is used to diminish the signs of social disorganization, as when abandoned buildings are removed from the neighborhood.

The second is a social dimension reflected in the level of social integration in the neighborhood. In communities with high levels of social integration, signs of social disorganization, although inducing perceptions of increased risk, do not engender increases in fear. The reason for this is that risk can be managed through knowledge of the area. For example, knowledge of boundaries between ethnic groups in conflict as well as of dangerous individuals and areas allows the citizen to move through the environment with relative safety, by careful avoidance of the persons and

28. Morris Janowitz, *The Last Half-Century: Societal Change and Politics in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

29. Gerald D. Suttles, *The Social Order of the Slum: Ethnicity and Territory in the Inner City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

places that pose danger. Because they know the people and the areas to avoid, the citizens do not exhibit high levels of fear, even though their risk assessments are relatively high.

CONCLUSION: A COMPARISON

The social control perspective differs from the victimization perspective both in the independent variables identified as producing fear and in the way the major dimensions—crime, fear, responses, and community—are conceptualized. Because these differences are directly related to proposed interventions, they assume importance for both the policy makers who design programs and the citizens expected to participate in them. Table 2 presents the key hypothesized relationships of the independent, intervening, and dependent variables in the two perspectives, both illustrating how the central concepts are defined and linked and indicating differences in the conception of what constitutes a crime, in the relationship of crime and community, and in the types of responses induced.

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 individual protection, tend to lead to isolation, distrust, and 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 integration 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.

Intervention programs spawned by both perspectives seek to strengthen communities. While programs spawned by the victimization perspective seek to induce collective responses to crime which generate social cohesion, as we indicated before, the link between the problems perceived by residents and the types of responses desired does not appear to be consistent with the views of local residents. Because we believe the social control perspective is more consonant with the perceptions and expecta-

Table 2. *A Comparison of the Victimization and Social Control Perspectives*

<i>Concept</i>	<i>Victimization Perspective</i>	<i>Social Control Perspective</i>
Crime	Crime is an event defined by criminal statutes as illegal. Crime is experienced by the individual. The potential victim is the key actor, for his victimization is the manifestation of crime.	Crime is an indication of the decline in the local moral order. The potential offender is the key actor in that decline. Crime demonstrates the lack of social control in the community.
Fear	Fear is a consequence of the experience of crime. That experience can either be direct victimization or the anticipation of victimization based on an assessment of local conditions.	Fear is a 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.	Local institutions, not individuals, respond to crime. Responses aim to strengthen the socialization and social control capacities of the community. Provincialism represents the control by the community of land and its use. Successful responses to disorganization and crime depend, structurally, on the level of provincialism in the community.
Community	Crime distintegrates the community. Community solidarity is disrupted by fear. Thus, because individual responses to crime decrease social cohesion and social control, it is difficult to unify communities in areas with high crime.	Community is the context in which crime affects the moral order. Community is a set of institutional relationships through which solidarity is maintained. Communities create crime by the way they are organized.
Intervention	Community crime prevention programs are designed to decrease victimization by increasing the potential victim's understanding of his risks and educating him about reducing those risks. Collective efforts by citizens reduce crime in the community by limiting opportunities for victimization.	Crime prevention programs are designed to increase the socialization and social control capacity of local institutions that support the conventional moral order. A strong emphasis is placed on working with adolescents who are in danger of becoming offenders.

tions of community residents, programs shaped by this perspective are designed to strengthen the capacity of the local community to exert social control.

The development of the victimization perspective and community crime prevention strategies offers a radical departure from offender-oriented prevention programming. The social control perspective modifies this innovative approach while leaving intact its emphasis on building community and increasing the participation of citizens in crime prevention efforts. Only further research and policy will test the utility of community crime prevention. However, these innovations offer the hope of crime prevention strategies that transcend the social reform failures of the 1960s and the repressive tactics of the 1970s.