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A Study of Neighborhood Level Effects on the Likelihood of Reporting to the Police

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A STUDY OF NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL EFFECTS ON THE LIKELIHOOD OF
REPORTING TO THE POLICE

BY

TONISIA M. PINSON

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Criminal Justice
in the
Andrew Young School of Policy Studies
of
Georgia State University

GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY
2012

ACCEPTANCE

This thesis was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Thesis Committee. It has been approved and accepted by all members of that committee, and it has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Criminal Justice in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies of Georgia State University.

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ABSTRACT

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By

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MAY 2012

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Research on reporting crime to the police on the individual- and incident- levels has received much attention over the years. However, many studies examining neighborhood-level effects on reporting are limited in scope. The current study examines the relationship between neighborhood characteristics central to social disorganization theory and police notification. Data for this study were derived from Warner's (2004) study entitled "Informal Social Control of Crime in High Drug Use Neighborhoods in Louisville and Lexington, Kentucky, 2000." The analysis uses OLS regression models to isolate how different neighborhood characteristics impact reporting. Findings indicate that disadvantage and mobility have a positive effect on reporting but are mediated by social cohesion. Social cohesion has a negative effect on reporting while confidence in police had no significant effects. Suggestions for future research are also discussed.

INDEX WORDS: social disorganization theory, reporting crime, neighborhood characteristics

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

It is well documented that a substantial portion of violent crime never comes to the attention of police (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1988; Hindelang, 1976; Laub, 1997; Skogan, 1984; van Dijk et al., 1991). According to the most recent U.S. National Crime Victimization Survey, only 49% of the 4.3 million violent crimes that occurred in 2009 were reported to the police (Truman and Rand, 2010). Although this discrepancy in the reporting of violent crime is problematic in its own right, research suggests that rates of police notification following violent occurrences may vary across neighborhoods (Anderson, 1999; Canada, 1995; Goudriaan, Wittebrood, & Nieuwbeerta, 2006). Despite the literature that suggests that neighborhood characteristics affect a variety of behaviors and outcomes, few studies have examined the impact of neighborhood characteristics on the likelihood of police notification. Reporting crime to the police on the individual and incident levels has been studied extensively (Block, 1974; Braithwaite & Biles, 1980; Felson et al, 1999; Felson et al, 2000; Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1988; Greenberg et al., 1979; Greenberg et al., 1982; Hindelang & Gottfredson, 1976; Ruback et al., 1984; Skogan, 1977, 1984; Laub, 1997), but relatively little is known about the existence, direction, and relationship of neighborhood effects on crime reporting (Baumer, 2002).

People choose to react to crime in different ways for different reasons. Some may choose to rely on formal authorities, such as police, while others may choose vengeance, self-help, mutually resolving conflicts amongst themselves, or doing nothing at all (Warner, 2007). These examples are methods of social control used to maintain order in communities. Social control consists of a normative system of rules about the way people should or should not behave along with a system of formal and informal mechanisms used to

control deviation from these rules (Rose & Clear, 1998). Whether stepping in directly or indirectly, the likelihood that residents intervene in some way is a universal measure of informal social control. Informal social control is usually enforced among family, friends, churches, neighborhoods, and other groups within a community while formal social control refers to the criminal justice system and its authorized agents that enforce the law officially. Social control is a key component in social disorganization theory. This theoretical framework will be used to discuss the prevalence and interdependence of both formal and informal mechanisms in a community and how this relationship affects a community's use of the law.

Theoretical Framework

Social scientists take an array of variables into account when trying to explain the effects of crime. As one explanation, social structure theorists have attempted to link criminal behavior patterns with social environmental factors. Arising as one of the most fundamental sociological approaches to the study of crime and delinquency at the community level is social disorganization theory which argues that crime occurs when the mechanisms of social control breakdown (Kelly, 2000). This body of research explains the variation of neighborhood crime rates through the community's ability and willingness to engage in informal social control. Introduced by Shaw and McKay ([1942] 1969), their research suggested that disorganized communities were characterized by poverty, ethnic heterogeneity, and residential mobility. The disorder causes a community to have an inability to recognize common values making it more difficult for its residents to solve their own problems, in turn, leading to an increase in crime and delinquency.

Shaw and McKay's ([1942] 1969) research began at the University of Chicago and the Institute for Juvenile Research in Chicago in the 1920s. During this time, industry was booming in the city bringing with it an increasingly diverse population. The city's rapid growth cultivated new social problems making Chicago the perfect laboratory for social research. One social issue they observed was the difference in delinquency levels in certain neighborhoods. Their study examined all of the 10 to 16 year old males who had been arrested, ordered to appear in court, or adjudicated by the juvenile court in the city of Chicago during 3 different time periods: 1900-1906, 1917-1923, and 1927-1933. The residential locations of the delinquent youth were plotted on a map in order to measure the rates of delinquency in different areas of the city. From their research, Shaw and McKay ([1942] 1969) made several significant observations. First, the rates of delinquency were found to be in a concentric spatial pattern with the highest rates being found in the inner-city areas and decreasing outwardly toward the more affluent areas. Second, other social problems such as poverty, deteriorated housing, and abandoned buildings were found to also be consistent with a concentric spatial pattern. Third, the spatial patterns of the delinquency rates were consistent over time despite the change in population over the years. Lastly, the course of becoming delinquent was found to occur through a network of interpersonal relationships involving family, gangs, and the neighborhood itself. From these observations, they concluded that delinquency was tied to the neighborhood and not to the characteristics of the people that lived in those neighborhoods. Crime was a response to the social, structural, and cultural characteristics of a community (Shaw & McKay, [1942] 1969).

Although social disorganization theory has been revised in recent years, the concept of social control has remained at the center of the theory through all subsequent restatements

and revisions. The capacity of a neighborhood to control and respond to crime and delinquency is dependent on establishing a balance between both informal and formal social controls (Rose & Clear, 1998). The development of strong informal social control is important for regulating conduct and mediating interpersonal disputes. The theory also suggests that the use of informal social control mechanisms may affect the degree to which residents utilize mechanisms of formal social control, in particular, the police. Formal control agents rely heavily on informal social control mechanisms to maintain order in their absence. In general, social disorganization describes a community's ability to realize common values of its residents and maintain effective social controls. Communities with the capabilities to manage its residents' behavior as well as balance the relationship between informal and formal control are considered to exhibit less disorganization than those that cannot (Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974).

One popular adaptation of the social disorganization theory is the systemic crime model. In this model, the community is viewed "as a complex system of friendship and kinship networks and formal and informal associational ties rooted in family life and ongoing socialization processes" (Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974, p. 329). This model suggests that the factors of poverty, racial heterogeneity, and residential stability are important because they affect social ties which provide the means for which shared values are circulated throughout the community. Thus, social ties within a community are perceived as a mediating variable between structural characteristics and informal social control. Disorganized communities are thought to be less able to establish friendship networks while communities with wider social networks are thought to be more likely to utilize informal social control mechanisms (Bursick & Grasmick, 1995).

The most recent adaptation of social disorganization discusses informal social control by highlighting mutual trust and solidarity amongst neighbors. This model suggests that networks and resources may be necessary, but not sufficient; the key factor is purposeful action (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003). Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997) refer to this concept as collective efficacy and define it as “social cohesion among neighbors combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good” (p. 917). The collective efficacy of a community exists relative to the tasks of supervising its residents and maintaining public order. When residents possess the willingness to intervene, informal social controls such as reporting, are strengthened. Thus, neighborhoods with weak social ties may still have strong mechanisms of informal social control if collective efficacy is high (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003).

Social disorganization theory highlights informal social control on the macro level. However, Hunter (1985) has provided a three-level approach to illustrate how informal social control can come in different forms. His most basic order of control is at the “private level” which refers to informal social controls among intimates and close friends. Some of the primary mechanisms of control that may exist at this level include direct criticism, ridicule, ostracism from the group, deprivation, desertion, self-destruction, or violence. The second level of control is called “parochial” order and represents the relationship between the interpersonal networks, local institutions, and other third parties, such as stores, schools, churches, and voluntary organizations. Private and parochial levels of direct social control are implemented by family members and neighborhood residents through a variety of mechanisms such as gossiping, withdrawing support and/or esteem, criticizing or admonishing inappropriate behavior, and supervising neighborhood activities. Lastly, the

third, level of social control is called the “public” level and focuses on the ability of the community to secure public goods and services that are allocated by agencies outside the neighborhood, such as police. This form of social control involves residents mobilizing an intervening party that has formal authority. Although formal authorities are involved, public social control is still considered informal because residents initiate the formal involvement (Warner, 2007).

Most research on contemporary social disorganization has focused on private and parochial controls while public social control has been less frequently examined. As aforementioned, the public level refers to a neighborhood’s ability to solicit and secure external resources through the establishment of relationships between neighborhoods and government officials. Accessing the resources that accompany these relationships should, in turn, bring about reductions in crime and victimization in the community. In addition to a reduction in crime and victimization, the infusion of resources should also trickle down to other areas in need such as increased educational services for youth (Velez, 2001). In a study by Carr (2003), it is suggested that it is not enough to only examine the role of public social control because the public and parochial arenas are inseparable. Coined as “new parochialism,” the concept is described as residents who engage in informal social control at the neighborhood level but facilitate government officials from the public sector for enforcement. Residents engaging in “new parochialism” seek to control crime and disorder, but choose to remove any personal involvement by contacting the police (Carr, 2003).

Bursik and Webb (1982) demonstrate that an imbalance of informal and formal relationships make it difficult to maintain social control over time. It is noted that social control is high when there are pervasive interpersonal ties among residents and the

community. Such ties were also central to Shaw and McKay's ([1942] 1969) formulation of social disorganization theory. In terms of neighborhood disorganization, researchers exploring informal social control mechanisms have developed two lines of competing thought on the nature of the relationship between disorganized communities and reporting crime to the police. Some researchers argue that communities with weak informal social control mechanisms tend to have difficulties securing an adequate share of various public services, such as police protection (Bursik & Grasmik, 1995; Hunter, 1985). Becoming isolated from public resources could inhibit reporting to the police because residents may perceive law enforcement as unlikely to respond or not likely to take their complaints seriously if they do (Anderson, 1999; Tyler, 2004). Residents of disorganized communities are, therefore, thought to be less likely to notify the police after a violent victimization. Others suggest that neighborhoods with ineffective informal mechanisms may be more dependent on formal social controls to settle interpersonal disputes and reduce future vulnerability to criminal victimization (Black, 1976, 1998; Conklin, 1975; Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979; Laub, 1980). These researchers imply that residents of disorganized communities may be more likely to notify the police following a violent victimization.

Several neighborhood level characteristics are commonly discussed as having an effect on reporting crime to the police, the first being socio-economic disadvantage. Disadvantaged communities are typically the least able to secure needed police protection and services. Residents of poor communities are much more likely than residents of other areas to report that officers were non-responsive, performed poorly in preventing crime, maintaining order in the streets, and responding poorly to victims (Sampson & Bartusch, 1998). Coupled with the breakdown in policing are patterns of police abuse where studies

(Fagan & Davies, 2000; Kane, 2002; Mastrofski, Reisig, & McCluskey, 2002; Smith, 1986) indicate misconduct is higher in disadvantaged communities than more affluent ones. Victims from socio-economically disadvantaged communities are thought to be less likely to notify police of victimization (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003).

Racial heterogeneity in a community affects reporting behaviors as well. Residents often select associates similar to themselves out of fear and mistrust of people that are different. Although, these various groups often share conventional values, heterogeneity interferes with interaction and communication (Sampson & Groves, 1989). Therefore, communities with high levels of racial heterogeneity are thought to be less likely to utilize informal mechanisms to control crime in their neighborhoods.

Lastly, population change and turnover have had negative consequences for social control. This dynamic is often discussed as mobility as well as stability. Mobility refers to neighborhood turnover rates while stability, its opposite, refers to the population that remains the same over a given period of time. When neighbors do not stay in a neighborhood very long, social ties are weakened, relationships are broken, and it becomes difficult to effectively secure outside agencies such as police (Warner, 2007). High rates of population change are thought to foster institutional disruption and weaken community controls (Kornhauser, 1978).

The structural effects of socioeconomic disadvantage, racial heterogeneity, and mobility on reporting behaviors is primarily discussed through social processes such as social cohesion and confidence in the police. These characteristics are considered to have a mediating effect on levels of informal social control. The idea that social cohesion affects reporting behavior is also drawn from the social disorganization model. It is assumed that

strong informal social control regulates conduct and mediates interpersonal disputes. Social networks and community cohesion are necessary for controlling crime and disorder in a community by serving as an informal coping mechanism that reduces vulnerability (Baumer, 2002). Social cohesion is defined by how willing residents are to help their neighbors, be trusted, and generally get along with each other which increases the residents' capacity to engage in control over individuals in the community while reducing crime and disorder (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003). As the amount of cohesion in the community increases, the likelihood that a common willingness amongst its residents to take action will also increase.

Confidence in the police is another neighborhood characteristic that is assumed to affect the probability of victims reporting. It has often been suggested that victims will not estimate the benefits of reporting crimes as highly if their confidence in police effectiveness is low (Hagan & Albonetti, 1982; Sherman, 1993; Anderson, 1999; Baumer, 2002; Goudriaan, Wittebrood, & Nieuwbeerta, 2006). Kubrin and Weitzer (2003) suggest that when police are viewed as unresponsive, residents may feel too vulnerable to risk intervention. Residents are more wary of intervening in any way when they have ineffective relationships with external agencies, such as the police. When the police are viewed as a responsive local resource, on the other hand, residents feel more empowered to intervene in inappropriate neighborhood behavior (Silver & Miller, 2004).

Social disorganization theory continues to dominate criminal justice literature by being the primary source of explaining the influence of neighborhood characteristics on crime. Socioeconomic disadvantage, racial heterogeneity, and residential mobility are believed to disrupt social organization, therefore, making it more difficult for communities to maintain control of their neighborhoods. Based on the social disorganization literature, we

will explore the extent to which neighborhood characteristics are likely to affect levels of reporting to the police. In addition to neighborhood characteristics of poverty, racial heterogeneity, and residential mobility discussed in the literature, we will also examine the effects of social cohesion and confidence in police on reporting. In the next chapter, the previous studies that have examined neighborhood characteristics in relation to reporting crime to the police will be examined. Chapter 3 will outline the methods of the study, chapter 4 will consist of the results, and the final chapter will discuss the findings and their implications for future research.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Social disorganization theory suggests that socioeconomic disadvantage, racial heterogeneity, and residential mobility affect informal social control at the neighborhood-level. Recent studies also suggest that social cohesion and confidence in police may also be important to examine at the neighborhood level because they have been found to influence the probability that victims report crime to the police as well. While most studies measuring informal social control groups all informal mechanisms together, this study will focus, specifically, on calling the police. There are a limited number of studies that examine neighborhood characteristics and reporting behaviors. Of these studies, only a few focus on multiple neighborhood-level characteristics simultaneously, thus, limiting the explanatory power of the overall literature. The following section provides a review of how socioeconomic disadvantage, racial heterogeneity, residential mobility, social cohesion, and confidence in police have previously been examined in relation to neighborhood rates of reporting crimes to the police.

Socioeconomic Disadvantage

The first community characteristic that will be examined in relation to reporting is socioeconomic disadvantage in a community. The term disadvantage refers to the extent to which a community's residents have low incomes and/or jobs and low levels of education. Disadvantaged communities are typically characterized as being least likely to develop and maintain relationships with external agencies. These communities are least able to secure needed police protection and public services. Within the social disorganization literature, empirical studies most commonly use the predictors of median family income level, the

percentage of families below the poverty line, the percentage of families on welfare, the average educational level, and percentage of Blacks in the neighborhood to make up the overall concept of socioeconomic disadvantage. Although percent Black is indicative of racial heterogeneity, empirical research examining racial heterogeneity as an independent measure separate from socioeconomic disadvantage is rare. All of these predictors have been found to be highly correlated with one another and, together, represent a solid measure of disadvantage (Agnew, 2009).

There have been several studies that have examined the relationship between neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage and reporting that did not find a significant relationship. For example, Fishman (1979) examined ten neighborhoods in Haifa, Israel and found that neighborhood socioeconomic status did not have an effect on the decision of victims of crime against persons or property to call police. Similarly, Bennett and Weigand (1994) examined ten neighborhoods in Belize and produced similar results. More recently, Baumer (2002) used data from the U.S. National Crime Victimization Survey to show that for aggravated assault and robbery cases, neighborhood disadvantage also did not affect reporting to police. Gottfredson and Hindelang (1979) used the 1974-1976 U.S. National Crime Survey to compare reporting behaviors across neighborhoods and found that poverty levels did not have a significant effect on victim reporting at the multi-variate level when levels of gun use and injury were controlled.

Other studies have found a positive relationship between disadvantage and reporting crime to the police. Hackler, Ho, and Urquhart-Ross (1974) asked citizens of 12 Canadian census tracts what they would do if they saw teenagers slashing the tires on their cars. The likelihood of calling the police was greater in neighborhoods with higher levels of economic

disadvantage. Neighborhoods with lower disadvantage were found to be more likely to use other forms of informal social control such as telling parents or attempting to talk to teenagers. As previously discussed, Baumer's (2002) study found no effect between disadvantage and reporting in aggravated assault and robbery victimizations, however, he did find a nonlinear relationship among victims of simple assault. The results suggest that reporting simple assault to the police increases with disadvantage except where disadvantage is extremely high. The positive relationship found in these studies suggests that there may be a breakdown in other informal control mechanisms as socioeconomic disadvantage increases, in turn, creating a reliance on calling the police to solve neighborhood issues. Social cohesion literature, which will be discussed subsequently, offers explanation for this relationship.

Other studies have found a negative correlation between socio-economic disadvantage and victim reporting. Goudriaan, Wittebrood, and Neiuwbeerta (2006) examined a variety of crimes including bicycle theft and car damage in 3,000 neighborhoods in the Netherlands, they note that neighborhood disadvantage significantly decreased reporting crime to police. This decrease was also shown to be accelerated in the extremely disadvantaged neighborhoods. Similarly, several ethnographic studies have also suggested that concentrated disadvantage decreases the likelihood of reporting (Anderson, 1999; Zatz & Portillos, 2000). Anderson's (1999) narrative explores the daily life of several neighborhoods in Philadelphia. His study highlights the responses that residents of socioeconomically disadvantaged communities have to crime in their neighborhoods. It is suggested that disadvantaged neighborhoods are more likely to produce subcultures, or 'codes', that dictate the ways its residents respond to crime including police notification.

Anderson (1999) goes on to suggest that neighborhood disadvantage has a negative effect on reporting crime to the police. Zatz and Portillos (2000) produced similar results. In an exploratory study, they sought to explain the variations in the strength and type of social control within a community. By conducting in depth interviews with 33 youth gang members and 20 adult neighborhood leaders in Phoenix, one of their many observations suggests that neighborhood disadvantage negatively effects police notification. It is unclear exactly what mechanisms are responsible for the negative relationship. It is unlikely that residents of disadvantaged communities fail to report because of monetary reasons since reporting is free, therefore, the effect must be indirect. The literature offers several explanations for the effect including social cohesion and confidence in police.

Residential Mobility

Another fundamental claim made by Shaw and McKay ([1942] 1969) was that population change and turnover should have negative consequences for social control. This dynamic is often discussed as mobility, or its opposite, stability. Mobility refers to neighborhood turnover rates while stability refers to the population that remains the same over a given period of time. High mobility rates are thought to decrease the residents' ability to develop a sense of social cohesion. When neighbors do not stay in a neighborhood very long, social ties are weakened and it is difficult to work effectively with outside agencies such as police (Warner, 2007). High rates of population change are thought to foster institutional disruption and weaken community controls (Kornhauser, 1978).

Few studies have directly observed the effects of residential mobility on reporting crime to the police. Hackler, Ho, and Urquhart-Ross' (1974) study, as previously discussed, also examined the relationship between residential stability and reporting. The study

suggests that residential stability had a negative effect on police notification but had a positive effect on alternative forms of informal social control. Merry (1990) observed similar results in regards to residential stability and police notification. The study found that residents of neighborhoods with higher proportions of renters were more likely to refer matters to court suggesting that neighborhoods with higher levels of mobility were more likely than stable communities to call the police. Similarly, Warner (2007) found that mobility significantly increases the likelihood of reporting. These studies suggest that residents in neighborhoods with high levels of residential mobility experience a lack of neighborhood cohesion and often feel isolated from other residents as well as formal resources. Therefore, neighborhoods with high rates of residential mobility are more likely to turn to police for assistance.

Social Cohesion

The importance of neighborhood social cohesion is drawn from social disorganization theory which suggests that strong informal social control is important for regulating conduct and mediating disputes in the community. Mutual trust and solidarity among residents largely affects their willingness to intervene (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). There is very little empirical research that directly tests the influence of social cohesion on reporting. Goudriaan, Wittebrood, and Nieuwbeerta (2006) note a positive result by observing a survey-based measure of neighborhood social cohesion. Using hierarchical linear modeling, their study found a significant positive relationship between social cohesion and the likelihood of reporting crime to the police. This study suggests that as social cohesion increases, there are more informal social control mechanisms enforcing public order. Social cohesion within a neighborhood can take different forms affecting the amount

of informal social control they provide. As the amount of solidarity in the community increases, the likelihood that a common willingness to take action will develop amongst its residents will also increase. Neighborhood social cohesion is considered to be necessary for controlling crime and disorder in a community (Baumer, 2002).

Several studies found a negative relationship between social cohesion and reporting crime to the police. Gottfredson and Hindelang (1979) examined this relationship using a proxy measure of social cohesion. Working from the assumption that there is less social cohesion in more urbanized areas, it was predicted that as urbanization increased the use of informal social control mechanisms would also increase suggesting a negative relationship between social cohesion and reporting. However, when controlling for seriousness, social cohesion and reporting exhibited no significant relationship with reporting practices. Similarly, Laub (1981) compared differences in reporting percentages between urban and rural regions in the United States. Residents of urban regions were found to be more dependent on police than rural residents who relied more on the support of their environment. Residents are thought to develop stronger reliance on formal control mechanisms to solve their problems in urban regions. Warner (2007) also observed a negative relationship between social cohesion and police notification. Using a survey-based measure of neighborhood cohesion, this study found that higher levels of social cohesion in a neighborhood actually reduced the likelihood that residents contacted formal authorities. Warner's (2007) study suggests that the sharing of common values and trust amongst neighbors increases the likelihood that residents will employ alternate forms of informal social control to maintain order in their communities.

Confidence in Police

Confidence in the police is another neighborhood characteristic that is assumed to affect the probability of victims reporting. It has often been suggested that victims will not estimate the benefits of reporting crimes as highly if their confidence in police effectiveness is low (Hagan & Albonetti, 1982; Sherman, 1993; Anderson, 1999; Baumer, 2002; Tyler, 2004; Goudriaan, Wittebrood, & Nieuwebeerta, 2006). Kubrin and Weitzer (2003) suggest that when police are viewed as unresponsive, residents may feel too vulnerable to risk intervention. Residents are more wary of intervening in any way when their neighborhood has ineffective relationships with external agencies, such as the police. When the police are viewed as a responsive local resource, on the other hand, residents feel more empowered to intervene in inappropriate neighborhood behavior by calling the police for assistance (Silver & Miller, 2004).

There have been several studies that have found a positive relationship between confidence in police and police notification. A study conducted by Sunshine and Tyler (2002) examined attitudes toward police and reporting behaviors of residents in two cities in New York state. They found that residents who viewed the police as legitimate were more likely to cooperate with police by reporting crimes, identifying criminals, and engaging in community activities that combat crime. Similarly, Silver and Miller (2004) also yielded positive results. Using hierarchical regression to examine multilevel data from the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods, they found that neighborhood levels of satisfaction with the police significantly contributed to reporting. The relationship between

confidence in the police and reporting observed in these studies suggests that positive perceptions of police increase the likelihood residents will utilize their services.

Findings from other studies have suggested that confidence in police has no effect on police notification. A study by Warner (2007) examined the extent to which neighborhood characteristics were related to the likelihood of using direct and indirect informal social controls. The results suggested that confidence in police had no effect on whether residents chose to contact police nor directly intervene themselves. Goudriaan, Wittebrood, and Nieuwebeerta's (2006) study also examined neighborhood levels of confidence in police and found no significant effect on the probability of reporting crime. Fishman's (1979) study of Israeli neighborhoods as well as Bennett and Weigand's (1994) study of Belize found no relationship between confidence in police and reporting when seriousness of offense was controlled.

Purpose of the Study

Overall, macro-level studies examining the effects of neighborhood variables on reporting crime to the police provide mixed results. Extant studies are often limited in the numbers of variables examined as well as the number of communities examined. The current study will add to the literature by conducting a study that analyzes a sufficient number of neighborhoods as well as examining variables central to social disorganization theory. In addition, prior studies of reporting behavior have focused primarily on the victims' decision to report. The present study will add to the literature by taking witness reporting into account along with victim notification to create a more encompassing reporting measure. The neighborhood variables of disadvantage, mobility, social cohesion, and confidence in police will be observed to test for a difference in reporting behaviors across communities.

Although the literature review illustrates various findings, the current study will base its hypotheses on the social disorganization framework. Socioeconomic disadvantage, racial heterogeneity, and residential mobility are thought to disturb neighborhood organization making it more difficult to maintain control of its residents. The following study will explore the following hypotheses: a) the higher the socioeconomic disadvantage in a neighborhood, the lower the probability that residents will report crime to the police; b) the higher the racial heterogeneity in a neighborhood, the lower the probability that residents will report crime to the police; and, c) the higher the mobility of a neighborhood, the lower the probability that residents will report crime to the police. In regards to the social processes of social cohesion and confidence in police, the current study will base its hypotheses on the assumption that more organized communities are more likely to engage in social cohesion and have higher confidence in police. Therefore, these additional hypotheses will also be explored: d) the higher the social cohesion in a neighborhood, the higher the probability that residents will call the police; and e) the higher the confidence in police, the higher the probability that residents will call the police.

CHAPTER III: METHODS

The data for this study were originally collected by Warner (2000) for a study entitled “Informal Social Control of Crime in High Drug Use Neighborhoods in Louisville and Lexington, Kentucky.” This neighborhood-level study explored the effect of cultural disorganization on informal social control and the extent to which these effects were conditioned by the level of drug use in the community. Using the 1990 U.S. Census, the sample included 66 block groups in two cities in Kentucky. Census block groups are the smallest unit of analysis large enough to provide standard census data for a macro-level study. In the past, community and crime level studies have used larger boundaries such as census tracts, political wards, municipally defined neighborhoods, or police beats (Sampson & Groves, 1989; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997; Smith and Jarjoura, 1989; Warner & Pierce, 1993; Warner & Wilcox-Rountree, 1997). As a result, these neighborhoods were generally quite large and comprised of several thousands of residents. For example, a study of Chicago neighborhoods, including several census tracts, yielded about 8,000 residents per cluster (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). Groups this large may potentially mask neighborhood level effects. The “hot spots” literature, for example, points out that even high crime neighborhoods have areas that are completely crime free suggesting that these data are lost in groups of this size (Sherman, Gartin, & Buerger, 1989; Roncek & Maier, 1991). Smaller units may display neighborhood effects better than large ones. As such, the use of census block groups is ideal for neighborhood-level studies.

A non-proportional stratified sampling method was used in this study to ensure that a sufficient number of high drug use neighborhoods would be represented in the sample. Using drug arrest data, block groups where at least ten drugs users were known to reside

were chosen to comprise the first strata labeled as high drug use areas (n=20). Block groups that were physically adjacent to high drug use areas (n=43) made up the second strata. The remaining non-adjacent blocks (n=440) were the third strata (Model 1). Census data for each block group were obtained and groups with less than 100 households were deleted. The remaining block groups were further subdivided into predominately white, predominately black, and racially mixed neighborhoods, ultimately, resulting in 353 block groups in Louisville and 150 in Lexington. Next, approximately one third of the sampling frame from the adjacent (n=20) and non-adjacent groups (n=28) were chosen while ensuring adequate representation of white, black, and racially mixed neighborhoods. All of the neighborhoods labeled as high drug use areas (n=20) were included in the sample bringing the sample size to 68 block groups (Model 1). Street segments within these block groups were identified using the “street section” of city wide directories. The directories distinguished between residents and businesses making it possible to select only households for the sampling frame (Warner, Leukefeld, & Kraman, 2003).

Model 1. Comparison of Sampling Frame and Sampled Block Groups								
(Louisville and Lexington)								
	TOTAL		HIGH DRUG USE		ADJACENT		NON-ADJACENT	
	<i>Sampling Frame</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Sampling Frame</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Sampling Frame</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Sampling Frame</i>	<i>Sample</i>
<i>Predominantly Black</i>	102	21	9	9	10	5	83	7
<i>Predominantly White</i>	349	23	3	3	18	7	328	13
<i>Predominantly Mixed</i>	52	24	8	8	15	8	29	8
<i>Total</i>	503	68	20	20	43	20	440	28

**Note: Taken from Warner, Leukefeld, & Kraman's (2003) Final Project Report*

A sample of approximately 60 households from each block group was selected through systematic random sampling. A letter was mailed to each sampled household informing them of the purpose of the study. In the letter, the recipients were also informed that they may be contacted to participate in the study which would be completely voluntary and confidential and that participants would be compensated \$15 for completing the survey. To ensure that each household received notification only days before the interviewer arrived, the mailing of the cover letters were staggered to coincide with the interviewers schedule. The cover letters were mailed to the sampled households in Louisville February 10, February 16, and February 25, 2000 and to the Lexington households April 1, April 5, and April 10, 2000.

Households with phones were separated from those without phones. Households with phones were turned over to the University of Kentucky Survey Research Center who conducted phone interviews between February 16 and June 11, 2000. To be certain that only the residents of the sampled addresses were interviewed, the interviews began with a member of the household confirming the address. The person in the household who was at least 18 and had most recently had a birthday was then given the survey questions. Disconnected numbers were tried two weeks later and if contact was still unable to be made, these households were moved to the no phone sample which were given a face to face interview. Phone interviews were attempted as many as 30 times while face to face interviews were attempted 5 times in order to conduct the survey. If no contact could be made by phone or face to face, a second random sample was drawn in order to achieve the desired 35 households per neighborhood. Two of the 68 neighborhoods had to be eventually dropped from the study due to low response rates. The remaining 66 neighborhoods had an overall

cooperation rate of 60 percent. Of the completed surveys, approximately 75 percent were conducted over the phone and 25 percent were conducted in person. Although both face to face surveys and phone interviews could possibly allow for variance in the results, a study by Rogers (1976) found no significant differences in the quality of data obtained from face to face interviews compared to telephone interviews (Warner, 2000).

Survey Instruments

The measures for the current study come from the above mentioned survey and the 2000 U.S. Census population counts.

Dependent Variable:

The dependent variable for the current study measures the proportion of sampled residents in a neighborhood that reported a crime to the police in the last six months. The variable was constructed in the following manner: first, the residents that were victims or witnesses to a crime in their neighborhood were identified. This was done by selecting only those respondents in each neighborhood that answered yes to either of the following questions. Thinking back over six months, a) “Have you witnessed or heard about any of the following crimes: a fight in which a weapon was used; a fight in which no weapon was used; a sexual assault or rape; a robbery or mugging; drugs being bought or someone trying to sell drugs; a spouse or partner being hit, slapped, punched or otherwise beaten; and; b) “While you have lived in this neighborhood, have you or any member of your household been a victim of violence, such as a mugging, a sexual assault, or a fight?” Respondents that answered “yes” to any of the above questions were also coded in terms of their responses to the following questions, a) “Did you, or anyone in your household, call the police in the last six months to report a crime or something you thought might be a crime that happened to

you while you were in the neighborhood?” and b) “Did you call the police during the last six months to report something that happened in the neighborhood (but not to you personally) that you thought was a crime?” The responses for each question were recoded with 1 representing “yes” and 0 representing “no.”

Residents that responded “yes” to at least one of the above questions regarding being a victim to or witnessing a crime as well as those that answered “yes” to having called the police for anything in the last six months were aggregated at the neighborhood level. Approximately 9 percent of the respondents reported being a victim and about 56 percent witnessed a crime. Those that called the police (n=615) in each neighborhood were divided by those that were victims (n=206) or witnesses to a crime (n=1343) to get the proportion of residents that were aware that a crime took place and, subsequently, notified the police (Model 2). Less than three percent of the cases had missing data on any of the measures. Such a small number of missing cases are unlikely to affect the results.

Model 2. Dependent Variable Descriptives					
	n	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<i># of Respondents that Witnessed Crime</i>	1343	4.00	33.00	20.3447	6.74452
<i># of Respondents that Victim of Crime</i>	206	1.00	8.00	3.3260	1.85704
<i># of Respondents that Called the Police</i>	615	1.00	13.00	6.2471	2.98958

Although the survey directly asked respondents about their reporting behavior, the dependent variable for this study is limited by the wording of the questions. There are two questions that ask whether or not the respondent was a victim or a witness to a crime in the

past 6 months, however, the follow up questions on police notification asks if they called the police for *anything* in the past six months. It is not possible to determine whether the victimization referred to in the first line of questioning is the same incident brought to police attention or if it was a separate incident altogether. For example, a respondent could answer “yes” to having witnessed a robbery, yet, chose not to contact authorities at that time. The same respondent could answer “yes” to calling the police for a domestic dispute on a different occasion. Because this respondent answered “yes” to both questions, this person would be included in the sample. Despite the lack of direct connection between the questions, the dependent variable for the current study does allow us to observe the proportion of residents that had an opportunity to utilize formal police services that did call the police.

Independent Variables:

Three of the independent variables for the current study are based on the traditional concepts identified by Shaw and Kay ([1942]1969) and Kornhauser (1978) as being the most important aspects of neighborhood-level studies. Socioeconomic disadvantage, racial heterogeneity, and residential mobility are neighborhood factors that have consistently been found to be prevalent in socially disorganized communities. Variables indicative of socioeconomic disadvantage, racial heterogeneity, and residential mobility were taken from the 2000 U.S Census populations counts. Collected at the block group level, the characteristics included percent under the poverty level, percent on public assistance, percent of female heads of household with children, percent with less than a high school degree, percent Black, percent renters, and percent of residents that lived in a different house five years previous (Model 3).

Model 3. Descriptives of Structural Characteristics				
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<i>Percent Below Poverty in 2000</i>	1.81	83.68	35.20	21.10
<i>Percent on Public Assistance in 2000</i>	0.00	33.65	8.87	8.48
<i>Percent of Female Headed Households in 2000</i>	0.00	84.94	29.56	21.46
<i>Percent with Less than a High School Degree in 2000</i>	1.60	62.35	32.78	14.44
<i>Percent Black in 2000</i>	0.27	99.23	49.88	32.63
<i>Percent Rent in 2000</i>	8.98	100.00	61.87	26.33
<i>Percent of Residents that Lived in Diff House in 1995</i>	26.7	88.22	53.99	14.13

A factor analysis was conducted using varimax rotation to determine whether there was one or more underlying factors linking the variables. Two factors with eigen values greater than one emerged suggesting that the variables under each component are measuring a similar concept (Model 4). Percent below poverty, percent of public assistance, percent with female headed households, percent with less than a high school degree, and percent Black all loaded on one factor. Although percent Black would be assumed to signify racial heterogeneity, the characteristic loaded as an indicator of socioeconomic disadvantage. Wilson (1993) explains that racial heterogeneity is often considered to be a conditioning effect of socioeconomic disadvantage and is frequently categorized as a measure of disadvantage. It is not unusual to find these characteristics existing in the same environment. Based on the factor analysis, percent below poverty, percent on public assistance, percent of female headed households, percent with less than a high school degree, and percent Black were averaged for the current study to create a measure of disadvantage for each neighborhood. The second factor with an

eigen value greater than one included percent renters and percent of residents that lived in a different house five years previous. These characteristics are indicative of mobility in a community. Again, based on the factor analysis, these variables were averaged to create a measure of residential mobility for each neighborhood.

Model 4. Independent Variable Factor Loadings		
	<i>Factor 1</i>	<i>Factor 2</i>
<i>% Below Poverty in 2000</i>	.845	
<i>% On Public Assistance in 2000</i>	.907	
<i>% Female Head of Household Families with Children in 2000</i>	.890	
<i>% Less than High School Degree in 2000</i>	.762	
<i>% Black in 2000</i>	.793	
<i>% Rent in 2000</i>		.676
<i>% Residents 5+ that Lived in Diff House in 1995</i>		.872

In addition to structural neighborhood characteristics, measures of neighborhood social processes were also examined. As discussed in Chapter 2, it has been suggested that social cohesion and confidence in police may influence the probability of reporting as well. The effects of neighborhood structural factors are argued to be displayed through social processes such as social cohesion and confidence in police which affect informal social control in turn (Warner, 2007). The social process variables were created by summing and averaging individual-level responses and, subsequently, aggregating them to the macro-level to create a neighborhood value.

The measure of social cohesion were answered on a likert scale and comprised from four questions similar to previous studies (Baumer, 2002; Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979; Goudriaan, Wittebrood, & Nieuwbeerta, 2006; Laub, 1981; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls,

1997; Warner, 2007; Warner, Leukefeld, & Kraman, 2003). Respondents were presented with the following items: “People in my neighborhood care about the neighborhood,” “People in my neighborhood can be trusted,” “People in my neighborhood share the same values,” and “People in my neighborhood generally get along with each other.” Respondents answered “strongly agree,” “somewhat agree,” “somewhat disagree,” or “strongly disagree.” Answers were recoded so that higher values would reflect higher levels of social cohesion. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was calculated at 0.829 suggesting that the internal consistency of this set of questions is high and they reliably measure the same construct (Model 5).

Model 5. Social Cohesion Survey Questions				
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<i>CARE ABOUT NEIGHBORHOOD</i>	1	4	3.28	.970
<i>GET ALONG WITH EACH OTHER</i>	1	4	3.51	.745
<i>CAN BE TRUSTED</i>	1	4	3.05	1.015
<i>SHARE THE SAME VALUES</i>	1	4	2.80	1.043
<i>Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.829</i>				

Each respondents’ answers to these four items were averaged and the averages were then aggregated by neighborhood to calculate a neighborhood average for social cohesion.

Respondents who failed or refused to answer (n=199) any of the survey questions pertaining to social cohesion accounted for less than 10 percent of the sample.

Confidence in the police was also measured by averaging the responses of several questions then averaging across respondents to obtain a neighborhood score. Respondents were presented with the following items: “The police play an important role in preventing

crime in this neighborhood,” “The police do a good job in responding to people in this neighborhood,” and “Police are generally helpful when dealing with people in this neighborhood.” Respondents answered “strongly agree,” “somewhat agree,” “somewhat disagree,” or “strongly disagree” (Baumer, 2002; Bennett & Weigand, 1994; Fishman, 1979; Goudriaan, Lynch, & Nieuwbeerta, 2004; Goudriaan, Wittebrood, & Nieuwbeerta, 2006; Silver & Miller, 2004; Sunshine & Tyler, 2002; Warner, 2007). Answers were recoded so that higher values reflected higher levels of confidence in police. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was calculated at 0.767 suggesting that the internal consistency of this set of questions is high and they reliably measures the same construct (Model 6).

Model 6. Police Confidence Survey Questions				
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<i>POLICE PREVENT CRIME</i>	1	4	3.2282	1.04548
<i>POLICE RESPOND</i>	1	4	3.0273	1.27387
<i>POLICE ARE HELPFUL</i>	1	4	3.2581	1.09278
<i>Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.767</i>				

Respondent’s answers were averaged across the three items and the averages were aggregated to calculate a neighborhood value of confidence in police. Respondents who failed or refused to answer (n=120) any of the survey questions pertaining to confidence in police, also, accounted for less than 10 percent of the sample.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The purpose of the analysis is to empirically explore determinants of reporting behaviors within a social disorganization model. As discussed in previous chapters, reporting behaviors are argued to be affected by diminished neighborhood structural characteristics. Because studies examining the relationship between neighborhood characteristics and reporting to the police are inconsistent, hypotheses derived from social disorganization theory were made. It is predicted that neighborhood disadvantage and neighborhood mobility will both have a negative effect on reporting crime to the police. Neighborhood cohesion and neighborhood confidence in police are predicted to have positive effects on reporting crime to the police.

Neighborhood Descriptives

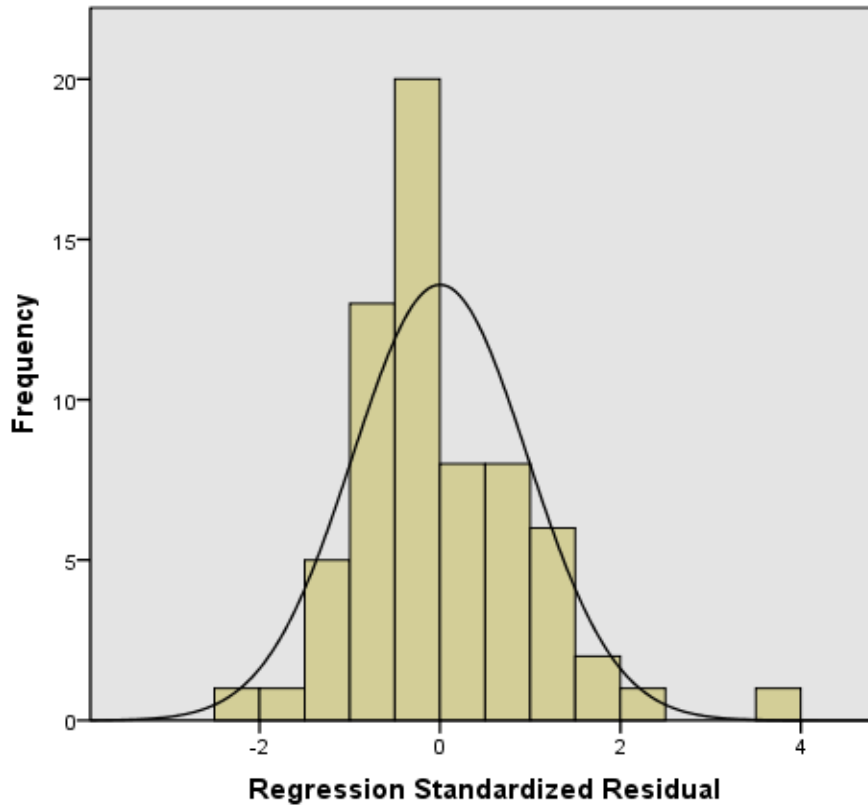
Model 7 presents neighborhood descriptive data for the variables in the full sample. As can be observed, approximately 40 percent of the respondents called the police after observing a crime in their neighborhood. The percentage of residents that contacted the police varied across neighborhoods from 19 percent reporting to a high of 76 percent. Model 7 also presents factor scores for socio-economic disadvantage, residential mobility, social cohesion, and confidence in police. Factor scores for socio-economic disadvantage and residential mobility reflect block level census data while factor scores for social cohesion and confidence in police are representative of survey data. The average neighborhood disadvantage factor score for the sample was 31.26 percent with neighborhood disadvantage scores ranging from 2.39 percent to 65.61 percent. Neighborhood mobility factor scores ranged from 23.50 percent to 89.98 percent. The average neighborhood mobility in these neighborhoods was 57.93 percent. The average level of social cohesion was relatively high

at 3.16, although the neighborhood factor scores ranged from 2.40 to 3.93. The average level of confidence in police was also relatively high at 3.20 percent and a range from 2.66 to 3.47.

Model 7. Description of Variables in Models					
	n	Percent/Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std. Deviation
Dependent Variable					
<i>Reporting Rates</i>	66	39.68%	19.0%	76.20%	.112030
Independent Variables					
<i>Neighborhood Disadvantage</i>	66	31.25729	2.394	65.608	16.74318
<i>Neighborhood Mobility</i>	66	57.92793	23.495	89.982	16.87572
<i>Neighborhood Cohesion</i>	66	3.156450	2.4015	3.9265	.35958
<i>Neighborhood Confidence in Police</i>	66	3.19689	2.6571	3.4667	.18322

The analysis moves on to examine the extent to which neighborhood-level factors central to social disorganization theory are associated with reporting crime to the police. An OLS regression model was used to examine the relationships between the variables. Regression analyses allow the researcher to assess the impact of an independent variable on a dependent variable through the introduction of controls. By adjusting for the impact of the other variables, multiple regression analysis provides a more rigorous and methodologically sound approach for evaluating the conditional effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable (Miethe, 2007). Model 8 illustrates that the regression model is a good fit for this study by showing that the dependent variable approximates a normal distribution.

Model 8. Normal Distribution of the Dependent Variable



The goodness of the fit is also illustrated by the lack of multicollinearity between the independent variables. Model 10 illustrates that there are no large correlations between neighborhood disadvantage, neighborhood mobility, neighborhood cohesion, and neighborhood confidence in police. The tolerance levels for each variable is more than .20 and the variance inflation factors (VIF) are less than 5. This indicates that none of the independent variables are highly related. The coefficients for neighborhood disadvantage ($B=0.000$), neighborhood mobility ($B=0.000$), and neighborhood confidence in police ($B=0.045$) suggest a small positive effect on the dependent variable while the coefficient for neighborhood cohesion ($B= -0.134$) suggests a small negative effect.

The effects of the exogenous variables of neighborhood disadvantage and mobility on reporting were examined first (Model 9). The social process variables of social cohesion and confidence in police were, subsequently, added in Model 10. The analysis was constructed in this fashion to observe the direct effects of neighborhood disadvantage and mobility. Direct effects are often diminished by indirect effects such as in this case neighborhood cohesion and confidence in the police (Warner & Wilcox-Rountree, 1997). Inconsistent with the hypothesis, Model 9 shows that neighborhood disadvantage has a significant positive effect on reporting crime to the police. This suggests that as neighborhood disadvantage increases, there may be a breakdown in informal control mechanisms, thus, creating a dependence on formal resources. Also inconsistent with the hypothesis, the model demonstrates that neighborhood mobility has a significant positive effect on reporting crime to the police. Increased levels of neighborhood mobility are thought to foster feelings of isolation among residents creating a greater need to call the police. The coefficient of determination (R Square) for Model 9 indicates that 14 percent of the variation in reporting is explained by neighborhood disadvantage and mobility.

Model 9. Regression Model with Exogenous Variables		
	Coefficient	Standard Error
Constant	.214***	.050
<i>Neighborhood Disadvantage</i>	.001*	.001
<i>Neighborhood Mobility</i>	.002*	.001
<i>R Square = .137</i>		

* $p \leq .10$; ** $p \leq .05$; *** $p \leq .01$

Model 10 introduces neighborhood social cohesion and neighborhood confidence in police. First, the results show that neither neighborhood disadvantage or neighborhood mobility have an effect on reporting as previously found in Model 10. Social cohesion, however, was found to have a significant negative effect on reporting which is also inconsistent with the hypothesis. As social cohesion increases, notifying police decreases. The diminished effects of neighborhood disadvantage and neighborhood mobility found in Model 9 suggests that the effects were mediated by the addition of social cohesion variable. Confidence in police had no significant effects. The coefficient of determination (R Square) for Model 10 indicates that 20 percent of the variation in reporting is explained by neighborhood levels of disadvantage, mobility, cohesion, and confidence in police.

Model 10. Regression Model with Social Process Variables				
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Tolerance	VIF
Constant	.603	.390		
<i>Neighborhood Disadvantage</i>	.000	.001	0.471	2.124
<i>Neighborhood Mobility</i>	.001	.001	0.507	1.972
<i>Neighborhood Cohesion</i>	-.134**	.064	0.344	2.905
<i>Neighborhood Confidence in Police</i>	.045	.082	0.860	1.163
<i>R Square = .200</i>				

* $p \leq .10$; ** $p \leq .05$; *** $p \leq .01$

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSIONS

Very few studies have evaluated the effects of neighborhood characteristics on reporting crime to the police. Using social disorganization theory as a foundation, the present study examined how neighborhood levels of socioeconomic disadvantage, residential mobility, social cohesion, and confidence in police impacted the decision to notify police. The empirical results in this study are partially consistent with the perspectives presented in social disorganization theory. It appears that the decision to call the police is, indeed, affected by the contextual factors such as socioeconomic disadvantage and residential mobility. Both have a direct effect on reporting behavior. However, once the social process variables of social cohesion and confidence in police were added in Model 10, disadvantage and mobility were found to be greatly diminished. The second model also revealed a negative relationship between social cohesion and reporting behavior while the relationship between confidence in police and the decision to reporting was found to not be statistically significant. This suggests that the direct effects of neighborhood disadvantage and mobility on reporting behaviors is mediated by social cohesion.

Although the positive relationship found between socio-economic disadvantage and reporting (Model 9) is consistent with the findings of Hackler, Ho, and Urquhart-Ross (1974), Merry (1990), and Baumer (2002), they are inconsistent with those hypothesized by the social disorganization model. The theory suggests that disadvantaged communities are more likely to have weaker informal social controls making it more difficult to secure various public services like police. This difficulty, in turn, leads to residents becoming less likely to contact police because they often feel as if police are unlikely to respond. The positive effect of disadvantage on reporting in the current study suggests a different explanation. Social

disorganization theory suggests that mobility decreases levels of informal social control which is inconsistent with the findings of the current study. Model 10 found a positive relationship between mobility and reporting similar to those found in the studies of Hackler, Ho, and Urquhart-Ross (1974), Merry (1990), and Warner (2007). Shaw and McKay (1942[1969]) propose that population change and turnover have negative consequences on the ability to work effectively with outside agencies, consequently, reducing reliance on police. However, the current study suggests that neighborhoods with high levels of residential mobility could possibly feel isolated from other residents, and, thus, be more likely to contact authorities to address neighborhood disputes (Warner, 2007).

Consistent with Warner (2007), Model 10 found a negative relationship between social cohesion and reporting behavior. Although the social disorganization model does not specifically address the term social cohesion, the theory suggests that solidarity amongst residents increases the likelihood that a common willingness to take action will develop in the community and the use of informal mechanisms will also increase. The current analysis suggests that as social cohesion increases, police notification decreases suggesting that higher levels of social cohesion may actually reduce a neighborhood's reliance on police. The residents' willingness to help, trust, and get along with each other may provide them with the perceived capability that they can solve conflict without the help of police. After adding neighborhood levels of social cohesion and confidence in police in Model 10, neither socioeconomic disadvantage (Baumer, 2002; Bennett & Weigand, 1994, Fishman, 1979; Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979; Warner, 1992) nor residential mobility was found to have any effect on reporting. With neighborhood confidence in police having no statistical significance, Model 10 suggests that neighborhood cohesion could be the underlining factor

in the observed relationship between the exogenous variables and reporting. The insignificant effect of confidence in police is similar to other recent neighborhood studies that examined the confidence in police (Bennett & Weigand, 1994; Fishman, 1979; Goudriaan, Wittebrood, & Nieuwebeerta, 2006; Warner, 2007). This suggests that confidence in police is not significantly related to the mobilization of formal authorities.

None of the results in the current study support the predictions of social disorganization theory. One explanation for these findings may be the method of analysis. The variables were analyzed using a linear regression model which does not detect the possibility of a non-linear relationship between the neighborhood characteristics and reporting. As previously discussed, Baumer (2002) found that neighborhood disadvantage could occur in a curvilinear fashion. To explore this possibility, the neighborhood disadvantage variable for this study was squared and its effects on reporting crime to the police were examined in Model 11. In line with Baumer (2002), the results illustrate a

Model 11. Regression Model with Squared Disadvantage Variable		
	Coefficient	Standard Error
Constant	.655	.383*
<i>Neighborhood Disadvantage</i>	.005	.001*
<i>Neighborhood Disadvantage Squared</i>	-8.22 E -5	.000*
<i>Neighborhood Mobility</i>	.001	.001
<i>Neighborhood Cohesion</i>	-.143	.063**
<i>Neighborhood Confidence in Police</i>	.017	.081
<i>R Square = .247</i>		

* $p \leq .10$; ** $p \leq .05$; *** $p \leq .01$

curvilinear relationship between neighborhood disadvantage and reporting. This suggests that reporting crime to the police is low in areas of the most affluent as well as in the areas that are the most disadvantaged, while reporting levels are highest in between the two extremes. A non-linear analysis of the variables may provide results that support the predictions of social disorganization theory which should be explored in future studies. Understanding these non-linear relationships will also help in the sampling of future neighborhood level studies by alerting researchers of types of neighborhoods that tend to underestimate, or in some cases, overestimate such effects (Baumer, 2002).

While the study supplements research on reporting at a neighborhood level, there are several limitations to this study that should be noted. The first to be discussed is the construction of the dependent variable. The purpose of the study was to observe how neighborhood level factors affect the likelihood of reporting. The idea was to collect all of the residents that had a reason to call the police (victims and witnesses) and determine the proportion of those residents that actually called police. The first survey questions on reporting behavior asked whether or not the respondent was a victim or a witness to a crime in the past six months. However, the follow up question asked if they called the police for anything in the past six months. It is impossible to determine whether the incident referred to in the first line of questions is the same incident that made them call the police. Future studies should use survey techniques that ask respondents about being victimized or witness to a crime then ask them specifically if they reported that particular crime to the police.

Another limitation in community and neighborhood studies that include victimization data is that they generally run into the problem of not having large enough samples to detect sufficient victimizations to estimate a difference across the areas (Skogan & Maxfield, 1981;

Taylor, 2000). Greenberg, Rohe, and Williams (1982) examined different ways that residents dealt with neighborhood problems and determined that calling the police was the least common approach to resolving community issues. Examining other forms of direct intervention accounting for the lack of reporting could have widened the scope of this study. Other means of social control such as avoidance, tolerance, or even self-help measures have been found to be used in neighborhoods as alternatives to calling the police. These factors should be considered in conjunction to those included in the present analysis.

Future neighborhood-level studies should also control for individual and incident-level characteristics. Past research has suggested individual-level variables, such as sex and age, are important predictors of police notification. Older people are more likely to report crimes than younger ones and females are more likely to report crimes than males (Rennison, 1999; Skogan, 1984). Therefore, a multi-level analysis would yield more stringent results. Severity or seriousness of a crime can effect reporting as well. It has been shown that victims are more likely to report to the police if they have been seriously injured or experienced great material loss (Goudriaan, Wittebrood, & Nieuwbeerta, 2006). The decision to report a crime to police, often, is thought to be made on the basis of a cost-benefit calculation. It is believed that a person goes through a process, consciously or subconsciously, to determine whether contacting the police is worth the effort (Gottfredson & Hindelang, 1979; Kury, Teske, & Wurger, 1999; Skogan, 1976, 1984; Sparks, Genn, & Dodd, 1977). The lower the costs of reporting a crime and the higher the anticipated results, the more likely victims are to notify police. However, these decisions are often made quite impulsively and a wide range of emotions play a role as well. Future neighborhood level

studies on reporting could yield stronger results by examining reporting behaviors for specific crimes separately.

The idea that people from different types of neighborhoods are more or less likely to call the police than others raises important implications for macro-level research. To begin, a person's decision to notify police could influence the allocation of criminal justice resources. Because victim notification is the primary means by which police become aware of crime, police often distribute resources according to the demand for services. If residents are not reporting, then the result could lead to under protected communities (Baumer, 2002). The lack of reporting could also lead to the absence of important ameliorative resources such as victim support services which rely on police referrals (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1988). The current findings suggest that neighborhoods with high social cohesion are less likely to report crime to the police implying that residents are employing other forms of informal social control. Therefore, it is detrimental for police to understand the alternative ways that residents deal with crime in order to increase reporting in these neighborhoods. A community policing model may be beneficial to pinpoint neighborhoods where reporting is low and establish a working relationship with its residents to balance social control in their communities.

In conclusion, the fact that less than half of all victimizations are reported to police raises the question of whether our justice system can operate effectively without this important piece of the puzzle. Understanding the circumstances surrounding the decision to report is necessary for the development and implementation of crime control strategies, and more specifically for efforts to increase crime reporting (Gourdriaan, Heike, & Nieuwbeerta, 2004).

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