


10-1986

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Baker, Daniel and Donnelly, Patrick G., "Neighborhood Criminals and Outsiders in Two Communities: Indications that Criminal Localism Varies" (1986). *Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work Faculty Publications*. 40.
https://ecommons.udayton.edu/soc_fac_pub/40

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NEIGHBORHOOD CRIMINALS AND OUTSIDERS IN TWO COMMUNITIES: INDICATIONS THAT CRIMINAL LOCALISM VARIES

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SSR, Volume 71, No. 1, October 1986

Most research on the mobility of criminal offenders examines distance travelled. This paper examines instead whether neighborhood boundaries are crossed. Comparisons of two neighborhoods in Dayton, Ohio, indicate community variations in criminal mobility. Juveniles from poorer, more transient neighborhoods are surprisingly less likely to stay in the neighborhood to commit their offenses than were adults.

Many community residents view crime as a more serious problem in neighborhoods other than their own (Brantingham and Brantingham, 1984) and they also tend to view crime in their neighborhoods as being committed by outsiders (Goodwin, 1979; Hindelang et al., 1978). Two issues need to be distinguished: (1) whether residents or non-residents (outsiders) account for more of the crimes committed within the neighborhood; (2) whether criminals commit more of their own violations in their own neighborhoods or elsewhere. The latter shifts the focus to the resident's criminal activity rather than crime in the neighborhoods.

It is possible for a given neighborhood's crimes to be committed mostly by residents even if these individuals commit but a small share of their violations near home. It is also possible that most offenders commit most of their offenses near home, while a small band of outsiders is responsible for the majority of the crimes in some neighborhoods.

Review of the Literature. Much of the previous research in this area deals with criminal mobility or crime spillover. Studies of criminal mobility focus on the spatial movement of persons to commit crime. Crime spillover refers to the crossing of a political boundary in the journey from origin of criminal to crime site (Hakim and Rengert, 1981). Two considerations are important in the studies relating to criminal mobility. They are the type of crime committed and the age of the offender. Crimes against the person may be different from crimes against property. Since many personal crimes, particularly homicides, are crimes of passion, these crimes may be more likely to occur closer to home than property crimes. We might also expect that juveniles might be somewhat less mobile than adults. Juveniles may not be as familiar with other areas of the community and they may not have access to other areas through the use of automobiles.

One early study focusing on types of crimes was done by White in Indianapolis (1932). While

all criminals tended to commit their crimes close to home, violent criminals tended to commit their offenses closer to home than property offenders. The mean distance from residence to crime site for manslaughter was only 0.1 miles indicating that a large proportion of these probably occurred in the person's own residence. The mean distance for assault offenses was 0.9 miles while the mean for rapes was 1.5 miles. The mean of 2.1 miles for robbery was the only personal crime distance which was higher than the property crimes of burglary (1.7 miles), grand larceny (1.5 miles) and petit larceny (1.4 miles). Auto theft (3.4 miles) and embezzlement (2.8 miles) were two property crimes which had significantly higher mean distances than any of the other offenses.

Many recent studies have focused on robbery and burglary which occur more frequently than most of the major offenses. Normandeau's study of robbery offenses in Philadelphia found the mean distance from residence to crime site was 1.6 miles (1968, referenced in McIver, 1981) while Reppetto's detailed study of robbery offenses in Boston found that the mean distance was only 0.6 miles (1976). Ninety percent of all robberies occurred within 1.5 miles of the offender's residence.

Capone and Nichols (1976) found that about one-quarter of apprehended armed robbery offenders committed their offenses within one mile of their home. Almost 60 percent of the apprehended offenders committed their offenses within three miles of their home. Unarmed robberies tended to occur closer to home than armed robberies with 36 percent occurring within one mile and 75 percent occurring within three miles. This difference may be due to the fact that juveniles commit a higher proportion of unarmed robberies than armed robberies.

Recent studies of burglary offenses indicate that in contrast to White's earlier study they now tend to be committed closer to home than robberies. Reppetto (1976) indicates that the mean distance for burglaries is 0.5 miles with 93 percent being committed within 1.5 miles. Pope (1980) found that 52 percent of burglaries occur within one mile of the burglar's residence.

Morris' now classic study of Croydon, England, indicated that most juveniles commit their offenses close to home or in the main shopping center (1957). Turner (1969) suggests that juvenile offenders tend to commit more of their crimes closer to home than adults. His study

found that about one-third of apprehended juveniles committed their offenses within one-quarter mile of their homes and 75 percent committed them within one mile.

These studies of criminal mobility paint a picture of crime as a close-to-home activity. They use distance from home to crime site as a measure to demonstrate that a very high percentage of all types of crimes take place within four miles of the criminals' residence with a lower, but still high percentage occurring within one to two miles. This research, while valuable, does not take into consideration symbolic distance. In cities and urban areas in general, a distance of only two miles can take a person through several distinct areas and into a very different social world. Travelling as much as four miles in one direction can bring a person across town or into a different city or suburb. In these cases, distance in miles may not be a sufficient indicator of the psychological or social distance a person travels.

In recent years a considerable body of research has developed on neighborhoods which includes analyses of defended neighborhoods and socially meaningful boundaries. Defended neighborhoods are residential social units where people share conditions of residence, common facilities and stores, churches and schools. Residents seal themselves off from other areas and dangerous outsiders by creating physical and social barriers. "Defended neighborhoods are the smallest area possessing a corporate identity that is known to both its members and outsiders" (Hunter and Suttles, 1972:57).

Defended neighborhoods must be understood in terms of the physical structure of the city and the cognitive map which residents have for their city. The physical structure includes the location of its facilities and activities, and its transportation and communication lines. For example, major streets or highways may serve as boundaries of neighborhoods. Cognitive maps may or may not align with actual physical maps. Residents frequently ascribe boundaries for their neighborhood which are not linked to actual differences in land use patterns, physical characteristics or transportation lines. Cognitive maps may be based on the degree of cultural homogeneity and are frequently aided by the use of names and unique identities that are attached to the neighborhood. By definition, the terms community and neighborhood imply both similarity and difference. The terms are relational in that they imply that members of the group share something in common with each other and that this commonality in some way distinguishes them from other groups (Cohen, 1985). Boundaries mark the beginning and end of a community and encapsulate the identity of the community.

Suttles argues that cognitive maps create symbolic boundaries and thereby act as social control agents and regulate spatial movement. The symbolic boundaries separate groups that

might come into conflict, restrict the range of association and thrust people into a common network of social relations. Suttles argues that defended neighborhoods are common in inner cities where residents seek to counter the anonymity and danger, either real or imagined, that exist there. The inner city resident attempts to "bound off discrete areas within which he can feel safe and secure" (1972:34). It is also in the inner cities where many people feel that the threats to their welfare and property come from outside their own neighborhood and community. The stronger the boundaries, therefore, the less likely is intrusion by external threats.

Our research will utilize neighborhood boundaries as a measure of criminal mobility by asking: whether most crimes in neighborhoods are committed by residents or non-residents of the neighborhood; and whether neighborhood residents commit their crimes in the neighborhood or elsewhere. This will allow a consideration of the strength of neighborhood boundaries. Where strong defended neighborhoods exist, most of the crime should be committed by residents. Strong neighborhood boundaries should serve to keep potential non-resident criminals out while simultaneously keeping their residents' criminality in by limiting their familiarity with other areas.

Description of Neighborhoods. The two neighborhoods studied in this research are both located in the City of Dayton. Dayton has a population of 200,000 residents and is the center of the fourth largest metropolitan area of Ohio. Situated in southwestern Ohio, Dayton's economic base is highly dependent on the automotive industry. In 1980, the median income of a city family was \$15,200 while minorities comprised 38 percent of the population.

The two neighborhoods, Southern Dayton View and Walnut Hills-Twin Towers, were chosen because of their similarities on a number of dimensions and because of their differences on a few other important dimensions. Both neighborhoods possess a corporate identity found in their names which are known both by neighborhood residents, city officials and most city residents. Signs mark the major entrances to the neighborhoods; neighborhood associations bear the names of the neighborhood; and the neighborhoods are entities recognized by the city government for planning and development purposes. Both are in the inner ring of city neighborhoods and are about one-half mile from the downtown area. Both neighborhoods are about one square mile. Both neighborhoods have very clear boundaries consisting of major streets, state highways and a small creek. Hence both neighborhoods have the physical features necessary for a defended neighborhood.

According to the 1980 Census figures shown in Table 1, Southern Dayton View was home to almost 9,000 residents while Walnut Hills-Twin Towers had just over 9,000 residents. The two neighborhoods were roughly the same in terms

of average number of household residents and the percent of one-person households. The two neighborhoods are also similar in that neither has a significant business district although both have small clusters of shops lining the major thoroughfares.

However, the two neighborhoods were very different along a number of important dimensions. Southern Dayton View is a predominantly black neighborhood while Walnut Hills-Twin Towers has less than a one percent black population. Southern Dayton View has a significantly larger young population, and a poorer population. It also has a higher rate of households with children with a female head of household. The lower rate of home ownership, the more multi-unit dwellings and higher vacancy rate of both residential and commercial units in Southern Dayton View indicates that it is somewhat less stable. Since the two neighborhoods are very homogenous along racial and social class dimensions, they both possess the homogeneity necessary for a defended neighborhood. The greater stability in Walnut Hills-Twin Towers may make it a somewhat stronger defended neighborhood.

Despite these significant differences in demographic characteristics, crime data for the two neighborhoods are about the same. Both the Southern Dayton View and the Walnut Hills-Twin Towers neighborhoods had a crime rate for Part I crimes in 1981 of 213 crimes per 1,000 population. The rate for Part II crimes for Walnut Hills-Twin Towers was 87 per 1,000 which is somewhat higher than the rate for Southern Dayton View where it was only 50 per 1,000. These total crime rates for Southern Dayton View and Walnut Hills-Twin Towers of 263 and 300 are somewhat higher than the overall city rate of 220 crimes per 1,000 residents. While these crime data are based on officially recorded crimes, and hence subject to certain methodological problems, another indicator can be used to estimate the level of troublesome behavior in the neighborhood. The number of police dispatches to the neighborhoods in 1981 gives a measure of the number of times that police responded to calls for a variety of situations, criminal or otherwise. In 1981, there were 11,116 police dispatches in Southern Dayton View for a rate of 1.24 dispatches per resident. In Walnut Hills-Twin Towers the corresponding figures were slightly higher at 12,931 and 1.39.

Methods. The analysis of the spatial relationship between the location of residence of offenders and the location of their offenses presents unique obstacles in the gathering of data. Many times offenses occur but are not reported to the police. In other cases crimes are reported but the suspect is never clearly identified or apprehended. In many other instances, leads are never uncovered and suspects are not apprehended. Some cases with known suspects are even diverted from the criminal justice system. For example, minor crimes occur everyday that are reported and forwarded to the City Prosecu-

tor's Office by way of police reports. After a review of the facts some of these cases are handled informally in meetings between all involved parties and actual arrests or court proceedings are not initiated.

This research did not speculate about the problem of crimes not reported by citizens. Nor were arrestees interviewed about other crimes for which they were not apprehended as this can often be unreliable. The research for this study relied on data collected at the time of the offenders' arrest. Arrests are predicated upon direct knowledge of the arresting officer or upon probable cause to believe that the offender is guilty. Information derived from Dayton Police Department arrest records included data on the offense, location of crime(s), and age and place of residence of the offender. These locations are assigned codes for sector, beat and the police district involved which allowed us to determine in which neighborhood of the city the offense occurred and in which the arrestee lived.

Researchers examined all arrest data from the entire city for the period of January 15, 1982 through April 15, 1982. This involved information concerning over 2,800 arrests. Each arrest record was reviewed to determine whether the arrestee lived in or committed a crime in either of the two target areas. Either or both conditions applied in the 623 incidents used for this study. Offenses were classified into one of four major crime categories: offenses against property, offenses against persons, public order offenses, and serious traffic offenses. Most of the property crimes were thefts, burglaries and robberies. These accounted for 81 percent of the 153 total property crimes. Assaults, felonious assaults and domestic violence accounted for 87 percent of the 71 crimes against persons. Public intoxication made up 52 percent of the 260 public order crimes while drug offenses made up another 12 percent. Driving while intoxicated offenses comprised the single highest number of the traffic offenses (42 percent).

Findings. There were a total of 623 persons arrested during the time frame of this study who either lived in or committed a crime in either neighborhood. Table 2 presents data on who commits crime in the two neighborhoods. About 70 percent of all crimes that resulted in an arrest were committed by residents of the area. There is virtually no difference between the two neighborhoods on this issue. In general, a high percentage of all types of crimes were committed by neighborhood residents. Relatively few outsiders crossed the neighborhood boundaries to commit crimes in Southern Dayton View and Walnut Hills-Twin Towers. Traffic offenses tended to be less likely than personal, property and public order offenses to be committed by neighborhood residents.

This might be expected since the very nature of traffic offenses indicates a degree of mobility. Still, however, 60 percent of these traffic

offenses are committed by neighborhood residents. Since the single largest crime in this category is driving under the influence of alcohol, our findings suggest that most of these offenses in the neighborhood are committed by local residents.

When we examine the various types of offenses in the two neighborhoods, there is little difference for the public order and traffic offenses. For the more serious crimes, there is a difference in the proportion of crimes committed by neighborhood residents. Eighty-five percent of the personal offenses committed in Walnut Hills-Twin Towers were committed by residents while only 72 percent of the personal offenses in Southern Dayton View were committed by residents. Violent crime in Walnut Hills-Twin Towers is therefore more likely to be committed by neighborhood residents than it is in Southern Dayton View.

On the other hand, property crimes in Southern Dayton View are more likely to be committed by neighborhood residents than they are in Walnut Hills-Twin Towers. Seventy-one percent of all property crimes in Southern Dayton View were committed by residents as opposed to 61 percent of the offenses in Walnut Hills-Twin Towers. This difference may be due to the socioeconomic characteristics of the two areas. Since Southern Dayton View is a relatively poorer neighborhood than Walnut Hills-Twin Towers, there is less incentive for outsiders to cross its boundaries to commit property crimes.

Twelve percent of those arrested for crimes in the two neighborhoods were under 18 years of age, 57 percent were between 18 and 29 and the remaining 32 percent were 30 and over. Table 3 provides information on the age and residence status of persons arrested for committing crimes in the two target areas. Eighty percent of those under 18 who were arrested for crimes in Southern Dayton View lived in that neighborhood. Almost 90 percent of the minors arrested for crimes in Walnut Hills-Twin Towers lived in the neighborhood. Only about two-thirds of those arrestees in the two older age groups lived in the neighborhood. This means that older persons were more likely to cross into our target neighborhoods to commit crimes than were young persons. Conversely, the neighborhood boundaries appear to be more effective in keeping out young persons living outside the neighborhoods than older persons.

When we shift focus to analyze the persons arrested for crimes while living in these two neighborhoods, we find that just over half of those arrestees who lived in the target area committed their crime in that target area (Table 4). Just under one-half of the arrestees residing in our two neighborhoods travelled outside their neighborhood to commit crimes. This indicates that the neighborhood boundaries of the two areas are not major barriers preventing residents from moving outside the areas to commit their crimes. Since we have already seen that only 31

percent of the persons arrested for crimes in the neighborhood were non-residents, the boundaries do not seem to be as effective in keeping residents in as they are in keeping non-residents out. There was a wide variation based on the type of offense committed. Almost two-thirds of those living in the target areas who were arrested for personal crimes committed their offense in the target area. This is consistent with the research suggesting that most crimes against the person are committed against people who are relatives, friends, neighbors or acquaintances of the offender. On the other hand, only 41 percent of those arrestees residing in the neighborhoods committed their property offenses in their own neighborhood.

Table 4 also shows that there are a number of differences between the two neighborhoods. More Southern Dayton View residents travelled outside their neighborhood to commit their crimes than did Walnut Hills-Twin Towers residents. Only 44 percent of the arrestees who lived in Southern Dayton View were arrested for crimes committed in their own neighborhood; 56 percent were arrested for crimes committed outside their neighborhood. Of those from Walnut Hills-Twin Towers, two-thirds were arrested for offenses in their neighborhood; only one-third committed their crimes beyond their neighborhood boundaries. This difference exists for each of the four categories of offenses although the difference is much greater for traffic offenses than they are for the other three types of offenses. The 20 percent difference in the proportion of property criminals between Southern Dayton View and Walnut Hills-Twin Towers again reflects the socioeconomic differences of the two areas. Since Walnut Hills-Twin Towers is relatively more prosperous than Southern Dayton View, its residents can illegally obtain more valuable property while staying in their neighborhood. The differences in the crimes against the person, public order and traffic offenses may be due to the greater number of bars and liquor establishments in or very close to Walnut Hills-Twin Towers. Alcohol-related offenses make up a large percentage of public order and traffic crimes and previous research shows that a large proportion of violent crimes are committed by or against persons who are intoxicated.

As Table 5 shows, age of the arrestees appears to make little difference in the selection of a crime site. Between 51 percent and 55 percent of those arrested in each of the three age groups were arrested for crimes in their own neighborhood. However, there are some differences when we examine the neighborhood-specific age groupings. Young people in Southern Dayton View are less likely than their older neighbors to commit their crimes in Southern Dayton View. On the other hand, young people in Walnut Hills-Twin Towers are somewhat more likely to stay within their neighborhood boundaries to commit their offenses.

Further examination of the data revealed that juveniles residing in Southern Dayton View did not travel far to commit their offenses. While only 35 percent were arrested for offenses in their own neighborhood, another 26 percent were arrested for crimes in the nearby downtown area and another 21 percent were arrested for offenses in neighborhoods adjacent to Southern Dayton View. Only 19 percent of those arrested travelled beyond the adjacent areas and none were arrested for crimes outside the city limits. However, of the adults arrested who lived in Southern Dayton View, only eight percent travelled beyond the areas immediately adjacent to their neighborhood. This indicates that, at least for the arrestees from this neighborhood, juveniles may travel farther away from their own neighborhood than adults.

Conclusions. Our research demonstrates that most neighborhood crime is committed by neighborhood residents. These findings suggest that defended neighborhoods and their boundaries are relatively successful in keeping non-resident potential criminals out. Even though there are significant differences between our two neighborhoods in terms of the racial and socioeconomic characteristics of the residents and the stability of the neighborhoods, both had similarly low percentages of crimes committed by outsiders. Both neighborhoods were particularly successful in limiting criminal activity by young persons from outside the neighborhood. However, residents from the neighborhoods we studied also went outside their own neighborhoods to commit a substantial portion of their crimes. This suggests that the neighborhood boundaries may be less constraining on residents than they are on outsiders. An alternate explanation is that residents perceive a greater gain or a lesser risk in committing crimes in other areas than outsiders perceive in our two neighborhoods. In the case of Southern Dayton View, for example, residents may go downtown or to other more prosperous neighborhoods to commit property thefts because the value of the goods is greater than the value of goods held by neighbors in Southern Dayton View.

Our research differs from most of the previous research on criminal mobility. Rather than using actual distance in miles as the measure of mobility, we examined whether neighborhood boundaries were crossed. Yet our findings are consistent with much of the previous literature. Since both of our neighborhoods are about one square mile in size, we know that most of the crime in the neighborhood is committed by persons who live within a mile or so of the crime site. Our research also indicates that about one-half of the residents of the area who were arrested committed their offenses within a mile or so of their homes. Most of those who went beyond the neighborhood boundaries to commit crime did not wander more than a mile away. The findings of previous research concerning

the distance travelled by juveniles may be tempered by our research. Juveniles from the poorer, more transient neighborhood were less likely to stay in the neighborhood to commit their offenses than were adults. Although they did not travel far beyond the neighborhood boundaries, a higher percentage of juveniles were arrested across the neighborhood boundaries.

Certainly, our research on two neighborhoods in one medium-sized Midwestern city cannot confirm the hypothesis that the symbolic nature of neighborhood boundaries deters the non-resident criminals from entering a neighborhood. However, the findings presented here are sufficient to suggest that future research along these lines is warranted. The research on defended neighborhoods and their boundaries would benefit from an analysis of their effects on crime.

NOTES

1. Part I crimes include homicide, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, larceny, and auto theft. Part II crimes are generally considered to include all other offenses.

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Manuscript was received July 29, 1986 and reviewed August 5, 1986.

Tables 1 through 5 appear on pp. 64-65.

Table 1. Characteristics of Two Neighborhoods in Dayton, 1980.

	Southern Dayton View	Walnut Hills-Twin Towers
Population	8,949	9,287
Percent under 18	43	31
Percent over 60	10	17
Percent minority	91	0.2
Income	\$8,712	\$15,992
Average occupants per household	2.8	2.5
Percent one person head households	29.8	27.2
Percent households with children	48	37
Percent of households with children with female head	11.3	3.9
Percent vacant units	22	7
Percent units owner-occupied	35	58
Percent commercial units vacant	30	13
1981 part I crime rate	213	213
1981 part II crime rate	50	87
Total crime rate	263	300
Police dispatches per resident, 1981	1.24	1.39

Table 2. Percent of neighborhood crime committed by residents.

	Total	Southern Dayton View	Walnut Hills-Twin Towers
Total crime (Base)	69% (388)	69 (173)	70 (215)
Property crime (Base)	67 (78)	71 (45)	62 (33)
Personal crime (Base)	78 (55)	72 (29)	85 (26)
Public order crimes (Base)	73 (175)	70 (67)	74 (108)
Traffic offenses (Base)	60 (80)	59 (32)	61 (48)

Table 3. Relationship between neighborhood crime, residence status and age of offender (Number in parentheses)

	Total	Southern Dayton View	Walnut Hills-Twin Towers
Percent of crimes in area due to arrestees living in area:			
Under 18	86(55)	80(16)	89(39)
18-29	67(135)	68(67)	66(68)
30 and over	65(80)	66(36)	65(44)

Table 4. Relationship between neighborhood arrestees and location of crime (Number in parentheses)

	Total	Southern Dayton View	Walnut Hills- Twin Towers
Percent of arrestees who commit crimes in own area:			
Total crimes	54(272)	44(120)	66(152)
Property crimes	41(52)	36(32)	56(20)
Personal crimes	63(43)	57(21)	71(22)
Public order crimes	59(128)	49(47)	66(81)
Traffic offenses	53(48)	39(19)	69(29)

Table 5. Relationship between Age of arrestees and location of their crime (Number in parentheses)

	Total	Southern Dayton View	Walnut Hills-Twin Towers
Percent of arrestees who commit crimes in own area:			
Total	54(266)	44(117)	66(149)
Under 18	55(55)	35(16)	74(39)
18-29	51(131)	46(65)	57(66)
30 and over	54(80)	42(36)	71(44)