EVALUATION OF NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME PREVENTION IN TULSA, OKLAHOMA

By

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EVALUATION OF NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME

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PREFACE

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CHAPTER I

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Introduction

One of the most popular approaches to the crime problem from the early 1970's onward has been what is known as 'community crime prevention'. Prior to the 1970's the burden of crime prevention and crime reduction fell upon the shoulders of the formal institutions of crime control - especially the police. The community crime prevention approach still recognizes the importance of these formal institutions. However greater emphasis now is placed on community residents, either individually or collectively, in efforts to prevent and reduce crime, and the fear that often accompanies it. The community crime approach, therefore, makes an effort to deal with the crime problem at the local level, using local people as a resource.

Thousands of programs have been created, ranging in size from small groups of concerned neighbors to comprehensive, complex, citywide or countywide programs. Some of these programs have been aimed at the prevention and reduction of several types or groups of crime, while others have simply dealt with one or two types of crime,

such as burglary or robbery. Almost all of these programs have been funded directly or indirectly with federal government monies, primarily through the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) or the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), which has taken over the responsibilities of the now defunct LEAA.

Problem Statement and Objectives of Research

Most of the previous research on crime prevention has focused on the effectiveness of individual programs in terms of reducing crime, the fear of crime, and the amount and type of citizen participation that occurred in the programs. Most of this research has concentrated on the results obtained for relatively large scale, citywide projects (Lavrakas, 1980; Mathews 1976; Schneider 1975). The broad aim of this thesis is to measure and investigate the effect that a community crime prevention program has had upon a much smaller areal unit-- a quarter square mile area in a residential district of Tulsa, Oklahoma. More specifically this thesis will concentrate mainly on the effect that a community crime prevention program has had upon behavior related to crime prevention and the effects of the program upon the perceptions of crime in the area.

The main data source for this research consists of responses to a questionnaire that was administered to eighty households in Tulsa during May, 1982. Basically,

this questionnaire was concerned with attitudes towards residential crime and household security. The questionnaire was modified from a survey instrument developed by Professor David Herbert at University College, Swansea, United Kingdom. The research reported here is part of a cooperative effort with Professor Herbert, designed to allow comparisons between Tulsa and findings for selected cities in the United Kingdom. Two quarter square mile study areas in Tulsa were selected (Figure 1) and forty households from each study area were chosen at random to be given the questionnaire, which was administered by a research assistant, Jane Wheeler (Figures 2 and 3).

The "Target Area" has been included in the 'Alert Neighbors' crime prevention program, details of which will be given below, while the "Control Area" is outside the target area of the program and was thus unaffected by it. The two study areas were selected on the basis that they were similar in socioeconomic structure and were also similar in terms of their built environments. Because of these similarities the Control Area could be used as a control to compare the effects of the crime prevention program in Target Area. The validity of using a control area will be discussed in a later chapter. In the statistical calculations, if p is less than or equal to 0.05 the relationship is assumed to be significant. A significance level of 0.05 is conventional in social science research of this type.

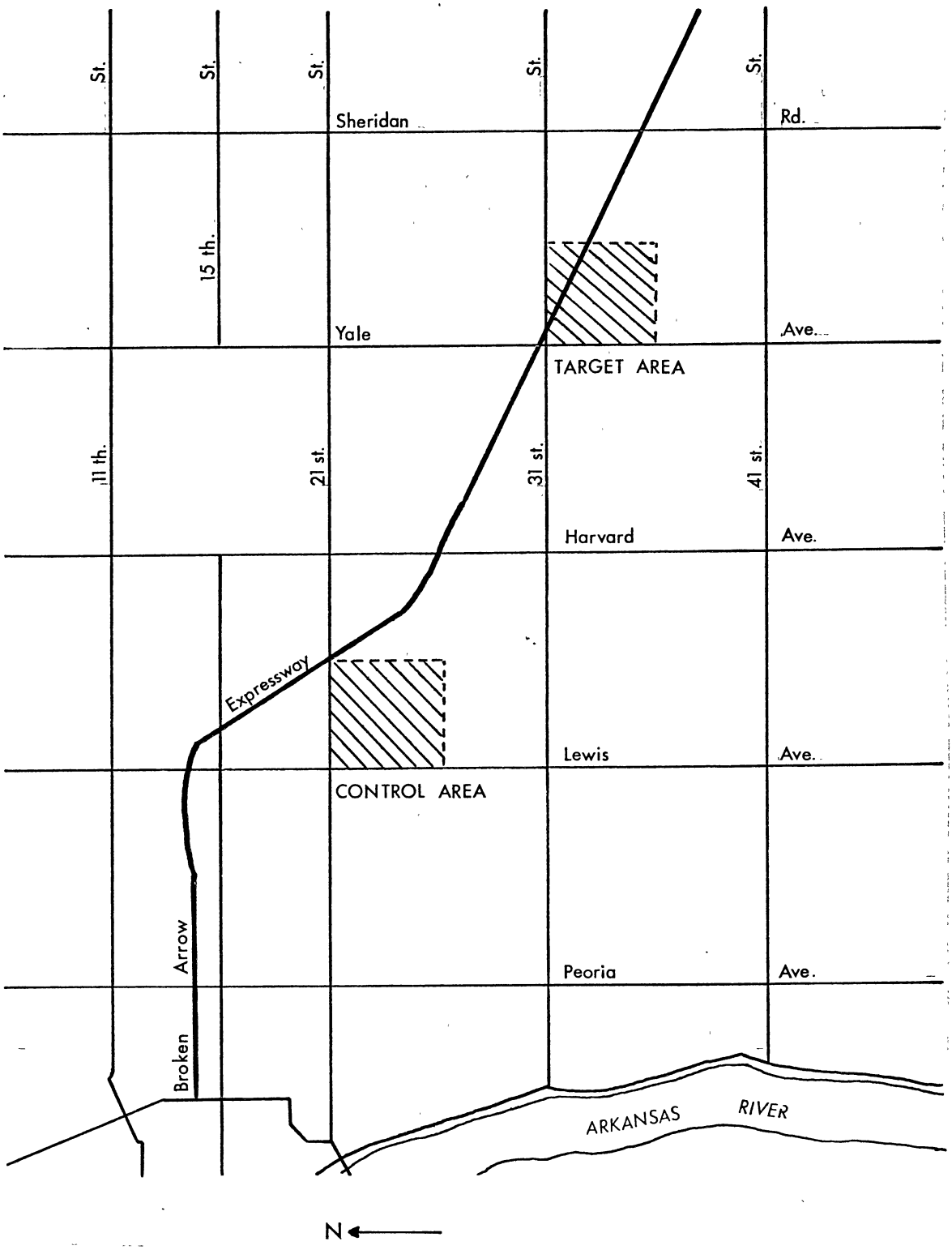

Figure 1. Locations of the Target and Control Areas

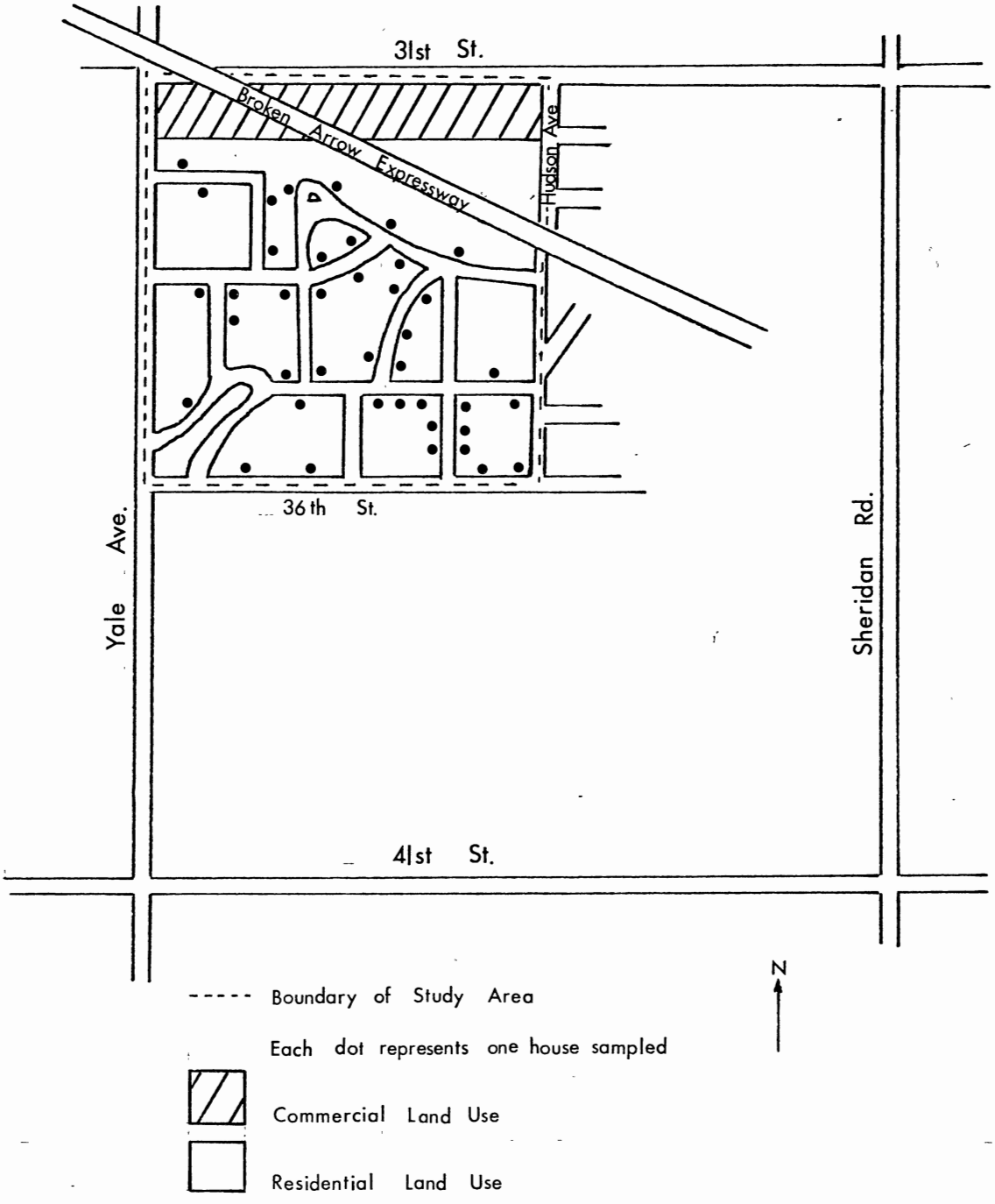

Figure 2. Land Use and Locations of the Houses Sampled in the Target Area

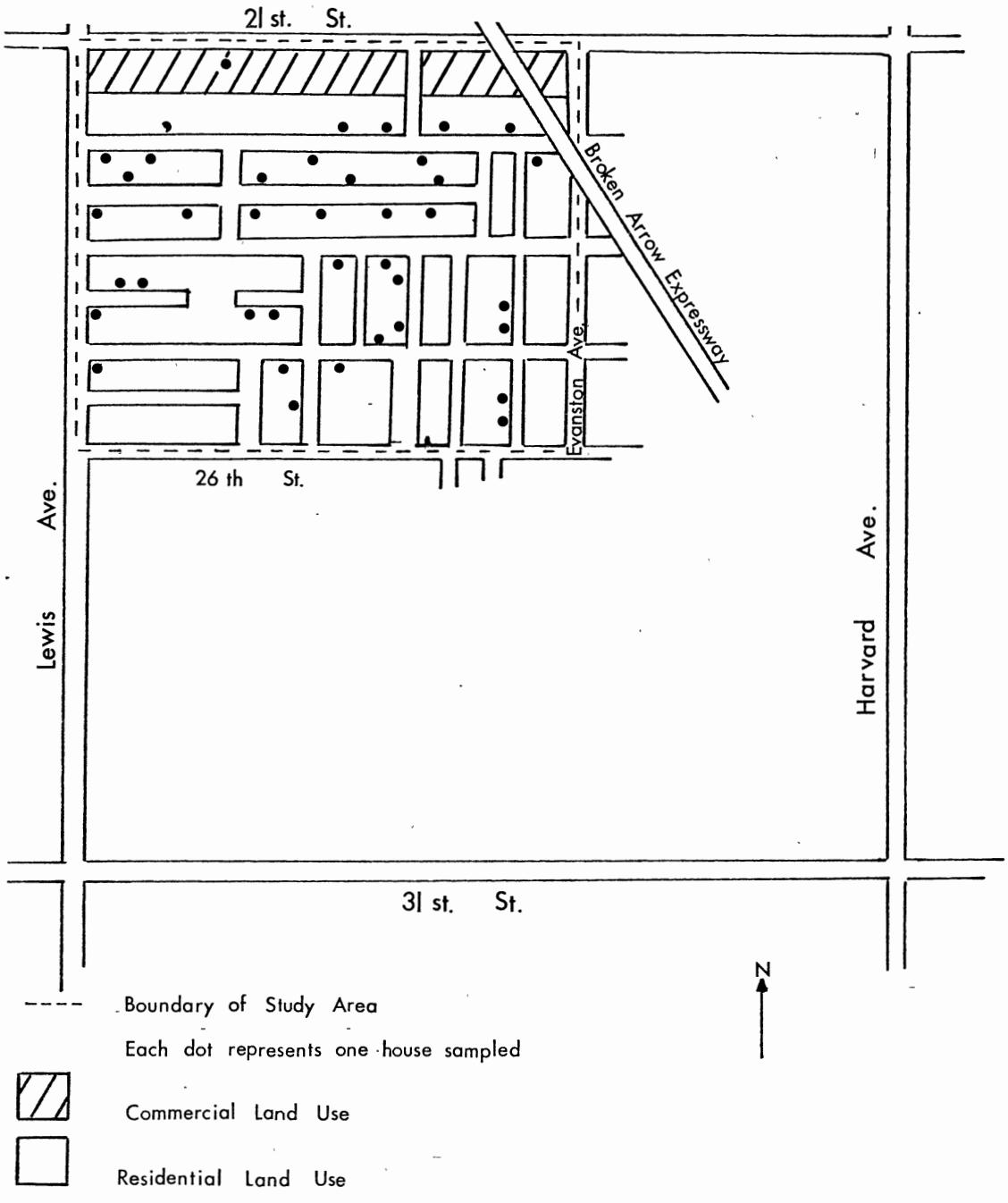

Figure 3. Land Use and Locations of the Houses Sampled in the Control Area

Research Context

The study of crime from a geographic perspective is not new. In the 1920's several sociologists from the University of Chicago were interested in spatial variations in crime within urban areas. Many of these sociologists, such as Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, Clifford R. Shaw, and Lewis Wirth, tried to explain why crime rates were high in the so called 'transition zone' adjacent to the city center, and low in the suburbs. In attempting to explain this phenomenon, Burgess developed his 'concentric zone theory'-- a theory that has been standard content in most textbooks on urban geography.

It was not until the late 1960's and 1970's that geographers took a real interest in the spatial aspects crime. The reasons for this sudden interest must be seen in the context of changes that were occuring within human geography at this time. The 1960's saw the rise of social awareness, exemplified by the civil rights movement, and the 'War on Poverty'. This meant that topics such as crime now became more popular areas of study in geography. At the same time, geographers were attempting to make their subject 'useful'; geography, in some respects, had become too detached from the real world to be of significant value in policy making and problem solving.

From the growth of behavioral geography and attempts to make geography useful, there developed a 'geography of

social problems'. Human geographers hoped that they could help to ameliorate social problems by studying them from a geographical viewpoint. One of the pressing social problems that came under geographic scrutiny was crime. The geography of crime also fits in well with behavioral geography, because criminal behavior is, after all, an aspect of human behavior. The pioneers of the geography of crime during the 1960's and 1970's were L. Lloyd Haring, Keith D. Harries, David T. Herbert, and Gerald F. Pyle.

The geography of crime has merged with a slightly broader field known as environmental criminology, which is concerned with how the physical and human environments relate to crime. From a geographical viewpoint, interest focuses on how variations in the environment affect the spatial distribution of crime. The subject of this thesis could be regarded as a topic in social geography, environmental criminology, or policy and evaluation research. This thesis investigates the differences (or lack of them) between two areas with regard to crime, crime prevention activity, and fear of crime. Both study areas were selected on the basis that their economic, built, and natural environments were similar. However, there is a major difference in the social environments of the two areas. One has been the target of a crime prevention progam, in which people are taught how to lessen their risk of criminal victimization, while the

other has not. The aim of this thesis is to investigate how this difference in the social environments of the two areas has affected crime-related perceptions and behaviors.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Both study areas are similar in their socioeconomic, demographic, and built environments. The first part of this literature review therefore will be concerned with the relationship between crime and the built environment and the effect that socioeconomic and demographic structure has on this relationship. The second part of the literature review will be concerned with the various aspects of community crime prevention programs.

Crime and the Built Environment

The Defensible Space Concept

Research on crime and the built environment has found that the characteristics of buildings and their design and layout within an area are related to crime and the fear of crime. The architect Oscar Newman (1972) found that some buildings and building designs encouraged social interaction and, by doing so, inhibited crime. Other buildings and neighborhoods had the opposite effect. Highrise apartment blocks with large numbers of people living in them seemed to promote crime because they

isolated inhabitants from each other and inhibited communication. This meant that it was difficult to determine who was a stranger, and unwatched areas were created where crime could occur. Large open spaces built into the layout of many public housing projects in the United States were factors in encouraging crime. This was because these open spaces were not part of any particular dwelling and often became 'no-man's-lands' that eventually fell under the control of the strongest elements, usually gangs of adolescent males who were generally feared by the other residents.

Newman found that particular features of the built environment operated to make it more or less 'defensible' against crime by influencing the opportunities for crime by indirectly influencing the behavior of people in that environment. This concept, that Newman called defensible space meant that if the built environment was designed in such a way as to promote defensible space then crime could be reduced by facilitating natural surveillance by the residents themselves. Defensible space could be promoted by careful positioning of windows and entries, by prescribing paths of movement and areas of activity that provide residents with continuous natural surveillance, and by having as low a number of units as possible that share a common entry off the street.

Research on the Defensible Space Concept

Subsequent research, in many cases, has provided support for the defensible space concept and for the influence of the built environment on crime and fear. For example, Newman and Frank (1980) found a positive correlation between measures of the built environment, such as building size and accessibility , and the levels of burglary and fear of crime in the housing developments studied. The opportunity for concealment provided by the built environment has been linked to offender behavior, fear of crime, and occurance of crime (Rubenstein, 1980). Hiding places near doors and windows were associated with higher burglary rates and opportunity for concealment was considered an important factor in an offender's choice of target. A recent study in Baltimore indicated that blocks which contain defensible space features had fewer crime problems and less crime than those neighborhoods lacking such features (Taylor, 1981). Such features included opportunities for surveillance provided by the built environment, and the use of real and symbolic barriers to define private and public spaces. These barriers , such as fences, hedges and curbs, made it possible to control the behavior of persons in those areas where such barriers were well defined.

Traffic, Land Use, and Crime

In neighborhoods through which a relatively large number of vehicles passed, crime rates were found to be higher and the fear of crime greater than in neighborhoods with less traffic (Fowler, 1981). This was because the residents thought the streets belonged more to outsiders than to themselves and thus a potential crime environment was created. In neighborhoods with a lot of through traffic, by reducing traffic volume there was a corresponding reduction in the fear of crime and an initial reduction in the crime rate was observed. Despite crime rates rising back to original levels, neighborhood cohesiveness was greater after through traffic was reduced.

Other research has investigated the relationship between physical characteristics that make neighborhoods accessible to outside traffic, and crime and fear. One of these studies addressed the question of why pairs of adjacent neighborhoods with a similar racial and socioeconomic structure had different crime rates. (Greenberg, 1981). Neighborhoods with a low crime rate were more physically isolated from the surrounding areas than the high crime neighborhoods. In the low crime neighborhoods the flow of outsiders into the area was limited because of the lack of traffic arterials through the area and the predominantly residential character of the neighborhoods. This isolation was thought to be the

main reason for the difference in crime rates between the neighborhoods studied.

Bevis and Nutter (1977) examined street intersections and discovered a higher frequency of residential burglaries in the locations with the most accessible streets, where one would expect heavy pedestrian and auto traffic. Accessible streets still remained important in explaining crime rates even when variables such as race, income, and number of juveniles were statistically controlled. Some research also has discovered that neighborhood locations that provide access and potential escape routes (for example, alleys and parking lots) appear to experience more crime than less accessible places (Heinzelmann, 1981).

The land use pattern of an area also can have an effect on crime. Some findings have suggested that particular commercial establishments or combinations of businesses in an area may produce particular crime outcomes (Frisbie, 1978). For example a concentration of adult entertainment outlets in an area were shown to increase the incidence of crimes such as assault and robbery.

Criticisms of the Relationship Between Crime and the Built Environment

The relationship between crime and the built environment has come under some criticism. Mayew (1979),

working in England, found that social characteristics of the resident population were stronger predictors of crime rates than the design features of a particular project. It was concluded that the most important variables affecting crime rates were the percentage of families on welfare, percentage of families headed by a female on welfare and per capita disposable income of families in the area. Mayew also criticized the reliance on natural surveillance that, in the defensible space concept, is supposed to be an important factor in crime prevention. Many crime witnesses do not react in a way that is detrimental to the criminal for a number of reasons: 1) observers often interpret crimes as noncrimes; 2) they are reluctant to intervene if the event is "unambiguously criminal"; 3) many people simply do not see crimes; 4) for various reasons (including personal familiarity with the offender), police may not be called; and 5) witnesses are unreliable as identifiers of suspects (Harries, 1980). Newman (1980) has come to recognize the dominant importance of the social characteristics of residents as determinants of behavior.

Wilson (1980) found little relationship between building design features and vandalism. All types of blocks could suffer damage, and rates of vandalism varied significantly between similar block types. Density of the child population and the number of children per block emerged as the two most important variables in explaining

the amount of vandalism. In general defensible space solutions to crime have helped to reduce crime but such solutions have failed if the social characteristics of the resident population have not been taken into account.

Fear of Crime and the Built Environment

Research has indicated that the environmental signs of neighborhood disorder (both physical and social) may be seen as fear-producing somewhat independently of crime itself (Lewis, 1980). Signs of disorganization, such as evidence of vandalism, graffiti, litter, abandoned buildings and loitering by youths and adults could convey to people living in these areas a lack of social control in their neighborhood. Because of the perceived lack of social control people see these neighborhoods as threatening to them.

Lewis and Maxfield (1980) discovered that some aspects of the built environment may be related to the fear of crime. They examined the relationship between the fear of crime and official crime rates. It was concluded that there were many inconsistencies between how people perceived the crime problem and amount of personal risk in an area, and the actual crime rate in that area, as depicted in the official crime statistics. For example, areas with low official crime rates were sometimes found to induce a lot of fear in people. It was argued that citizens' perceptions of crime were shaped not so much by

neighborhood conditions (as reflected in the official crime rates), but by the level of incivility in the neighborhood. Indicators of incivility tended to induce fear in people because they perceived that there was a lack of social control. Indicators of incivility included abandoned buildings, signs of vandalism, drug use, and loitering teenagers. Fear of crime was triggered by a broad range of neighborhood conditions, of which the built environment was part, rather than by the incidence of crime itself.

Research on Crime Prevention and Crime Prevention Programs

Crime Prevention Behaviors

Lavrakas (1981) investigated differences between homeowners and renters in the type and quantity of measures they used to try and prevent burglary. This distinction between homeowners and renters was made because it was argued that homeowners had invested more, both financially and psychologically, in their homes than had renters. The results of the analysis indicated, as suspected, that there was a clear distinction on the lines of residential status in terms of the type and quantity of measures used to try and prevent household burglary. For homeowners, the six most important variables that explained the level of household protection measures employed were (in descending order of importance):

perceived efficacy of home protection measures, attendance at a neighborhood crime prevention meeting, marital status, knowledge of burglary victims, perception that neighbors help each other out, and belief in personal control. For the renters, the eight most important predictors of household protective measures were (in decreasing order of importance): perception of the efficacy of home protection measures, household income, attendance at a crime prevention meeting, being a victim of burglary, knowledge of the local environment, perception that neighbors help each other out, age, and marital status.

These results indicated that homeowners, because of their greater financial and psychological investment in their homes, were more motivated (by their perceptions of crime in their neighborhood) to employ household protective measures. Renters, on the other hand, were more motivated to employ these measures by actual experience of burglary.

Although the results indicated that crime-related experiences and perceptions were somewhat related to household protective activities, they were by no means the primary determinants of household protective measures taken. Probably Lavrakas' most important finding from the point of view of this thesis, is that there was a significant relationship between attendance at crime prevention meetings and employment of anti-burglary measures.

Factors Relating to Participation in Crime Prevention Programs

Lavrakas and Herz (1982) investigated the reasons for, and nature of, citizen participation in neighborhood based crime prevention efforts. This was done by using information from a survey in Chicago. It was discovered that urban areas with higher crime rates were more likely to contain neighborhoods where group anti-crime efforts developed. However a high crime rate may be a necessary rather than a sufficient condition for the origin of such efforts. In suburban areas anti-crime efforts tended to be proactive, i.e., crime was not perceived as a problem but the anti-crime effort was developed to stop it becoming a problem in the future. In the city areas anti-crime efforts developed as a reaction to high crime rates. The authors then investigated differences between participants and non-participants in the anti-crime efforts. The largest proportion of participants were in the 30s and 40s age groups because such individuals had a greater vested interest in the community and its safety than other age groups. Individuals with less than a high school education appeared more inclined towards non-participation than participation. Minorities, especially blacks, were over-represented as participants. The reasons for the high black participation were thought to be that they were more likely to live in neighborhoods with a high crime rate, had less confidence in the ability

of the police to control crime, and they had an activist tradition to build on stemming from the civil rights activities of the 1960s. Participants also demonstrated more personal control over their lives, a greater territorial attitude, and more responsibility for crime prevention than non-participants.

The authors found that neither fear of crime in the neighborhood, perceived risk of burglary or robbery, nor perceived seriousness of criminal victimization significantly differentiated participants from non-participants in crime prevention programs. Also, previous victims of crime were only slightly more likely to be participants than non-participants in such programs. However, the majority of participants were also members of some voluntary community-based organizations while the majority of non-participants were not members of such organizations. Although many of these community-based organizations had crime as their main focus they were initiated for reasons other than crime. Crime became part of an organization's agenda only when crime was perceived as a problem in the community.

Similar conclusions to those of Lavrakas and Herz were also reached by DuBow and Podolfsky (1982). They found that participants in collective (community) responses to crime were not distinguishable from non-participants in the way they viewed the seriousness of crime, their personal risk, the efficacy of possible

solutions to the problems of crime, or in their fears of crime. Most community groups or organizations had undertaken some sort of collective response to crime, although crime was not the original reason for the formation of the group and most groups were multi-issue in nature. Most people involved in a community group that had an anti-crime program participated in that program. General involvement in community groups was shown to be related to social integration. The higher an individual's integration into their neighborhood (through having ties to the neighborhood resulting from having children, owning homes, and length of residence) the more likely they were to be involved in community groups.

Impact of a Crime Prevention Program

Norton and Courlander (1982) examined the impact of a crime prevention program upon elderly people (over 55 years old). The program studied had a police patrol aspect that increased police 'visibility' on the street and a crime education aspect that dealt with methods of crime prevention. The effect of the program on the fear of crime and security-conscious behavior was investigated. It was found that those persons who reported that the program had had a great impact on them also reported more security-conscious behavior. This relationship between impact and on security-conscious behavior, however, disappeared when past victimization, the impact of media

coverage of crime on a person, and how many times a person discussed crime with others were controlled for. This suggests that certain outside factors may be more important than crime prevention education programs in affecting security-conscious behavior among the elderly.

The second major finding of the study was that there was a significant positive relationship between the impact of the program on the people studied and the fear of crime. This relationship disappeared for crime victims, those who restricted their activities due to the media coverage of crime, and for all those who discussed crime frequently with others. The relationship between impact of the program and fear did remain for non-victims, those who did not restrict their activities, and those who did not discuss crime frequently with others. It was concluded that crime prevention meetings may create an environment that increases security but at the same time increases fear of crime. This was thought to be because elderly people with a low level of fear came into contact with seniors who had a high level of fear. This high level of fear could have been caused, for example, by being a victim of crime or knowing a victim of crime. The interaction between those who were fearful of crime and those who were not produced 'vicarious victimization' in the low fear elderly , thus increasing their fear. The program, therefore, had a positive effect in terms of security consciousness but a negative effect in terms the fear of crime.

Criticisms of Crime Prevention Programs

Criticisms of Federally Funded Programs

As noted previously, many community crime pevention programs have been sponsored by federal grants, primarily the LEAA and more recently the NIJ. McPherson and Silloway (1981) examined the effect of this federal funding upon community crime prevention at the local level.

Their analysis indicated that the policies and guidelines expressed by the LEAA had a detrimental effect on the success of many crime prevention programs. One of the policies of the LEAA was that each community crime prevention program should be carefully and objectively planned using quantitative data. Because there was such a great emphasis on the formal planning process, program planning had to be done by people with formal technical training. Therefore planning of the programs was in the hands of a small number of technocrats and citizen participation in the planning process was very limited. Because of this lack of citizen participation, programs were devised that tended to to be inconsistent with the citizens' viewpoints. Much of the formal planning that did take place was 'compliance planning' in order to meet federal requirements to get the grant. This compliance planning mitigated against adaptations in the programs that met local needs and problems. Hence many groups found themselves with a program in which the community had

no interest, or stake, and hence little subsequent involvement.

The way that the LEAA defined the crime problem had a detrimental effect upon community crime prevention programs. Crime was defined in legalistic terms and the guidelines expressed by the LEAA stated that the aim of the programs should be to eliminate these crimes and the fear induced by them. This legalistic definition of crime, however, may have been too narrow for local purposes. Many people are primarily concerned about such things as petty vandalism, youthful loitering, noisy or speeding cars, disturbing the peace, and so on. Many of these activities are never reported to the police and are not considered serious enough by the federal funding agencies to require attention. With the concentration on crime defined in legalistic terms, many of the problems that concern the average citizen were not dealt with and hence it was difficult to mobilize citizens to participate in federally funded programs.

The geographical size of the target area of a crime prevention program had important effects on the problems that could be dealt with, and on citizen participation. Most federally funded projects covered large areas such as a community, city or county. Because of the large size of the target areas, the problems that were tackled by the programs became very general and were not adequately adapted to local needs. The large target areas often

meant that a very select group of officials and key persons were involved in broad problem definition and program development. Hence there was a lack of 'grass roots' participation at the neighborhood level in planning and development and so it was unlikely that very local problems would be adequately addressed.

The policy statements of the LEAA, expressed in the form of guidelines, tended to encourage uniformity between crime prevention programs. Because there was only slight variation between programs, ethnic, economic, geographical and historic variations in communities tended to be overlooked.

One of the major aims of federally funded programs was to encourage citizen participation in the programs. However, due to the lack of citizen participation in such things as problem definition, program planning and development, participation was mainly a matter of 'doing as you are told'-- usually some dull repetitive task. There was therefore little incentive for volunteers to give their time to the program and so citizen participation became a problem.

The main conclusion of the study was that federal funding ensured that communities would not develop their own problem definitions and programs to solve these problems. Community crime prevention efforts had been distorted to the point where the programs reflected federal government approaches to the crime problem and not locally identified problems and solutions.

Lewis (1979) was also critical of the way that the LEAA affected community crime prevention programs. The sociological theory that guided the crime prevention programs was that crime and the fear of crime breaks up the cohesivness of the community and drives people apart. If the citizens of the community could be mobilized into collective actions against crime, then a greater sense of community would develop and informal social controls over crime could be fostered. The LEAA guidelines for program development did not explain why communities would respond collectively to crime. The social mechanisms and structural supports that could facilitate the creation of collective responses to crime were not mentioned by the LEAA. Thus there was another 'gap' in the LEAA guidelines for the development of crime prevention programs.

General Criticisms of Crime Prevention Programs

Crime prevention, for the first 75 years of the twentieth century, was concerned with changing the motivation and predisposition of offenders to commit crimes. In the 1970's a new approach to crime prevention developed in which the focus of attention shifted from potential offenders to potential victims and how their behavior and environment could be altered to prevent crimes from being committed against them. This new approach has been termed the 'victimization perspective'

(Lewis and Salem, 1980) and it is this perspective that underlies many community crime prevention programs. Basically, the victimization perspective sees the fear of crime as a consequence of an individual's direct or indirect experience of a criminal event. Community crime prevention programs try to prevent crime and the fear of crime by reducing the opportunities for victimization to occur. Lewis and Salem (1980), however, feel that the victimization perspective has many limitations, which in turn adversely affected the success of community crime prevention programs. As noted before, some studies have indicated that the relationship between victimization and fear is inconsistent. In general, fear was induced by indicators of social disorganization which reflected a community's inability to exert social control. Examples of indicators of social disorganization would be abandoned buildings, loitering teenagers, and vandalism.

Lewis and Salem (1980) argue that programs spawned by the victimization perspective do not appear to be consistent with the views of the local residents because the indicators of social disorganization are not being dealt with. Instead, they argue for a social control perspective to be used as the foundation for community crime prevention programs. Basically the social control perspective calls for multi-issue community programs and organizations to be encouraged. These multi-issue organizations could deal with the various aspects of

social disorganization that induce crime and the fear of crime. Programs dealing with crime alone are far too narrow in outlook to have a significant effect upon crime.

Summary

The first part of this literature review was concerned with the relationship between crime, the fear of crime, and the built environment. In general, it would appear that some aspects of the built environment do have an effect on the incidence of crime. By manipulating the built environment to promote 'defensible space' the incidence of crime can be reduced. However, the built environment is by no means the only determinant of crime, and its manipulation will not lead to an automatic reduction in crime. Other characteristics of an area, such as socioeconomic and demographic structure, are important in determining the incidence of crime. The literature does indicate a more definite relationship between the fear of crime and the built environment. Some aspects of the built environment, such as evidence of vandalism, abandoned buildings, and graffiti, can convey to many people that there is a lack of social control in an area. Because of this perceived lack of social control, people see these areas as threatening to them. This relationship between the fear of crime and the built environment is somewhat independent of the incidence of crime itself.

The latter part of the review was concerned with the various aspects of crime prevention and crime prevention programs. It would seem that crime prevention programs may have a positive effect on a person's inclination to employ anti-crime measures and adopt behaviors that could lessen the risk of victimization. However, crime prevention programs may increase fear of crime. Interaction between victims and non-victims during the course of a program may promote 'vicarious victimization' in the latter group, which may increase their fear of crime. Participants in crime prevention programs were differentiated from non-participants on a number of social, economic, and demographic grounds, such as age, race, education, residential status, and integration into the community. There seemed to be little significant difference between participants and non-participants in terms of their fear of crime and past experience as victims.

Federal involvement in the planning, development, and funding of many crime prevention programs may have had an adverse effect on citizen participation and ultimate success of programs. This was because federal involvement mitigated against adaptations in the programs that could have met local needs. The 'victimization perspective', that many of these programs were based on, may have been too narrow an outlook to have a significant impact upon crime.

The crime prevention program being studied in this thesis was not funded by federal money. The Alert Neighbors program was sponsored by the Citizens Crime Commission of Tulsa. Hopefully, the program would have avoided some of the detrimental effects of federal funding described by McPherson and Silloway (1981), and Lewis (1979). It is interesting to note that the guide for the Alert Neighbors program (Alert Neighbors Against Crime, 1982) was based on material from the Minnesota Crime Prevention Center. In 1981, McPherson was executive director, and Silloway a research associate, of this organization. As will be seen in a later chapter, the Alert Neighbors program was only partly based on the 'victimization perspective'. The program also stressed the importance of fostering informal social controls in the neighborhood that could help reduce crime. The program did not attempt to manipulate the built environment to promote defensible space.

CHAPTER III

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY AREAS

Introduction

One of the main premises underlying this thesis is that the only major difference between the two study areas is that one was the target of a community crime prevention program, and the other was not. In other words, one area is being used as a 'control' in order to gain an insight into the effectiveness of the Alert Neighbors campaign, and to investigate differences in crime-related behavior and perceptions this campaign may have caused. It is, therefore, the aim of this chapter to establish that the two neighborhoods are very similar in their socioeconomic, demographic, and built environments. If these three background variable sets are similar, then the validity of using one area as a control will be upheld. The secondary aim of this chapter is to give an insight into the general socioeconomic, demographic, and built characteristics of the study areas.

Comparison of the Socio-Economic and Demographic Backgrounds of the Study Areas

The study by Lavrakas (1981) indicated that there were important differences between homeowners and renters in terms of behavior related to preventing household burglary. Of the total of eighty households surveyed, seventy-nine were owner occupied. It is safe to assume that no significant difference exists between the study areas in terms of residential status. The confounding effect that the presence of renters will have upon the results is negligible.

No significant differences exist between the two area samples in terms of their residential stability (Table I). Both the target and control areas have relatively little turnover of residents, especially when one considers the high spatial mobility in the United States. In both areas, about half of the residents surveyed had lived at the same address for over ten years. Both areas have a similar proportion of residents who have lived in Tulsa for over ten years. In fact, only two people had lived in Tulsa for under five years (Table II). Any regional differences in crime-related perceptions and behaviors will probably have little effect on the results because of the high proportion of long-term Tulsa residents included in the survey.

TABLE I

LENGTH OF RESIDENCE AT PRESENT ADDRESS, BY AREA

Length of Residence	% in Target Area	% in Control Area
Less Than 2 Years	10.0	17.5
3 to 5 Years	17.5	20.0
6 to 10 Years	20.0	12.5
Over 10 Years	52.5	50.0

Chi Squared=1.60, p=0.64, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

TABLE II

LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN TULSA, BY AREA

Length of Residence in Tulsa Area	% in Target Area	% in Control Area
Less Than 5 Years	0.0	5.0
6 to 10 Years	12.4	5.0
Over 10 Years	87.5	90.0

Chi Squared=3.30, p=0.35, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

One of the principal indicators of the socioeconomic status of a household is given by the occupation of its main wage earner. As indicated in Table III, there is no significant difference between the control and target area samples in terms of the occupation of the main wage earner. In both areas, well over half of the main wage earners are classified as professional, or as having an occupation intermediate between 'professional' and 'skilled'. The remainder of the households are headed by retired persons. The inference that can be drawn from these results is that both areas are probably middle to upper middle class in their overall socioeconomic status.

Both study areas show a general similarity in their demographic and family structures. A similar number of families in both areas have children (17 in the control area and 13 in the target area). The number of one parent families is also very similar (Table IV). The age structures of the two areas show slight differences (Table V). The age structure of the target area is slightly older than that of the control. The median age of people in the control area falls in the 35-40 age category. In the target area the median age is in the 45-54 age category. Also, more people over 55 are found in the target area than in the control area. Some differences also exist in the number of one-person families. Eleven and six one-person families are found in the control and target area samples respectively. The majority of these

TABLE III

OCCUPATION OF THE MAIN WAGE EARNER, BY AREA (%)

Occupation	Target Area	Control Area
Professional	13.2	26.3
Intermediate	50.0	31.6
Retired	36.8	42.1

Chi Squared=3.38, p=0.18, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

TABLE IV

PERCENT OF ONE PARENT FAMILIES AND PERCENT OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN, BY AREA (%)

	Target Area	Control Area
One Parent Families	10.0	12.5
Families With Children	42.5	32.5
Families Without Children	57.5	55.0

Chi Squared=1.26, p=0.60, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

TABLE V

AGES OF RESIDENTS COVERED IN THE SURVEY, BY AREA (%)

	Target Area	Control Area
0 to 4 Years	6.5	6.0
5 to 14 Years	6.5	13.0
15 to 19 Years	4.3	5.0
20 to 24 Years	4.3	5.0
25 to 34 Years	17.4	20.0
35 to 44 Years	4.3	9.0
45 to 54 Years	12.0	9.0
55 to 54 Years	20.7	7.0
Over 65 Years	24.0	27.0

Chi squared analysis was not possible due to sparsity of the table.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

families are composed of retired people. Given the relatively high proportion of over 55s in both areas, a number of one-person families is to be expected due to the death of a spouse.

Despite some differences in the age structure, the family and demographic compositions of both areas follow a similar pattern with a relatively high proportion of older, retired couples and singles. Most of the rest of the families are composed of young-to-middle aged couples with children. Relatively few single parent families are found in either area, along with hardly any young singles or young couples without children.

The 1980 census tract data that exist for the study areas are of very limited use for this study, but some discussion is appropriate in order to demonstrate these limitations and justify the non-use of census data as a resource for this analysis. The control area makes up about half of Tulsa Tract 42, and the target area comprises approximately one quarter of Tract 70. Therefore, the census data cover areas that lie outside of the study areas. It cannot be expected that sample data and tract data will be identical, or even very similar. Comparisons of the census tract data for the study areas must, therefore, be treated with extreme caution.

The 1980 census indicates that the median family income was $24,194 for the tract covering the control area, and $22,121 for the one covering the target area

(Table VI.). The median value of owner occupied houses was $71,900 in the target area and $61,900 in the control area (Table VI).

A very large difference exists between the census tracts that contain the study areas in terms of the proportions of owner occupied houses, which were 88 and 40 percent respectively. A large discrepancy also exists between the census data and the sample data in this respect. Almost 100 percent of the houses sampled were owner occupied.

The census tracts have a similar occupational structure, as indicated by the occupation of the heads of households. However, some difference exists between the occupational structures that were found in the sample and those shown in the census (Table VII). In both target and control areas, the sample indicated a smaller proportion of people with a professional occupation than did the census.

Moving on to the demographic data in the census, some differences are found in the age structures indicated by the census and sample. The pattern found in the sample of a higher median age in the control than target area is repeated in the census data. However, the median age for the target area was lower in the census data than in the sample data (Table VI). Relatively little discrepancy exists between the census and sample data with regard to the proportion of the population under 19 years of age

TABLE VI

COMPARISON OF CENSUS TRACT DATA AND SURVEY DATA FOR THE STUDY AREAS

Variable	Census	Sample
Median Family Income		
Target	$22,121	N.A.
Control	$24,194	N.A.
Percent of Owner Occupied Houses		
Target	40.3	100
Control	88.5	97.5
Median Age		
Target	30.3	39.5
Control	45.3	49.5
Percent of Population Under 19		
Target	24.8	17.3
Control	20.9	23.7
Percent of Population in the Same House as Five Years Ago		
Target	31.2	90.0
Control	71.1	87.5

N.A. means that no data was available.

Note: 1982 Survey and 1980 US Census of Population.

TABLE VII

COMPARISONS OF CENSUS TRACT DATA AND SURVEY WITH REGARD TO OCCUPATION OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD, BY AREA (%)

Occupation	Target Area	Control Area
Census Data		
Professional	32.3	46.4
Intermediate	48.5	43.1
Skilled	10.2	6.8
Semi-skilled or Laborors	9.0	3.1
Survey Data		
Professional	29.4	34.5
Intermediate	70.6	65.5
Skilled	0.0	0.0
Semi Skilled and Laborors	0.0	0.0

Note: 1982 Survey and 1980 Census of Population.

(Table VI). However, a large difference exists between the census and sample when data on residential stability is examined. Only 31 percent of the population in the target area census tract were living in the same house in 1980 as they were in 1975, while 90 percent of the target area sample were living in the same house as they were 5 years previously.

Generally not too much agreement is found between the census tract data and the sample data. On the whole, the census data indicates differences between the areas, while the sample indicates similarities. Only the census data on family income, house values, and proportion of the population under 19 show a lack of differences between the census tracts. However, because the census data contains information from outside the study areas, using this data to compare them is of very questionable value. It is interesting to note that the largest differences between census and sample data are found in relation to the target area. In the census, the target area comprised only one quarter of the tract, compared with the control area that comprised half of its tract. Unfortunately, the 1980 block level census data were not available at the time of writing. This data would have avoided the problem of overlapping study areas and census tracts.

Comparison of the Built Environments of the Study Areas

Unfortunately, the survey instrument contained no questions concerning the built environments of the study areas. Comparison of the study areas' built environments is based upon the results of field observations made by the author. Despite the somewhat subjective nature of the observations noted below, they will give some indication of the built environments.

Both quarter square mile study areas are bounded on two sides by major urban arterials (Figure 1). Some commercial development exists along 21st Street in the control area and 31st Street in the target area. This development takes the form of retail outlets and small offices. Little of the commercial development in either area spreads into the interior of the study area, where the predominant land use is residential (Figures 2 and 3). The predominant residential land use type, in both areas, is the single family dwelling. The relatively modest size of the houses and their lots indicate that they probably belong to families of middle class status. Figures 4 and 5 show two typical streets in the target and control areas respectively.

Two of the roads that border the study areas (21st and Harvard in the control, and 31st and Yale in the target) are major traffic arterials, and so have relatively high traffic counts. In the control area, the

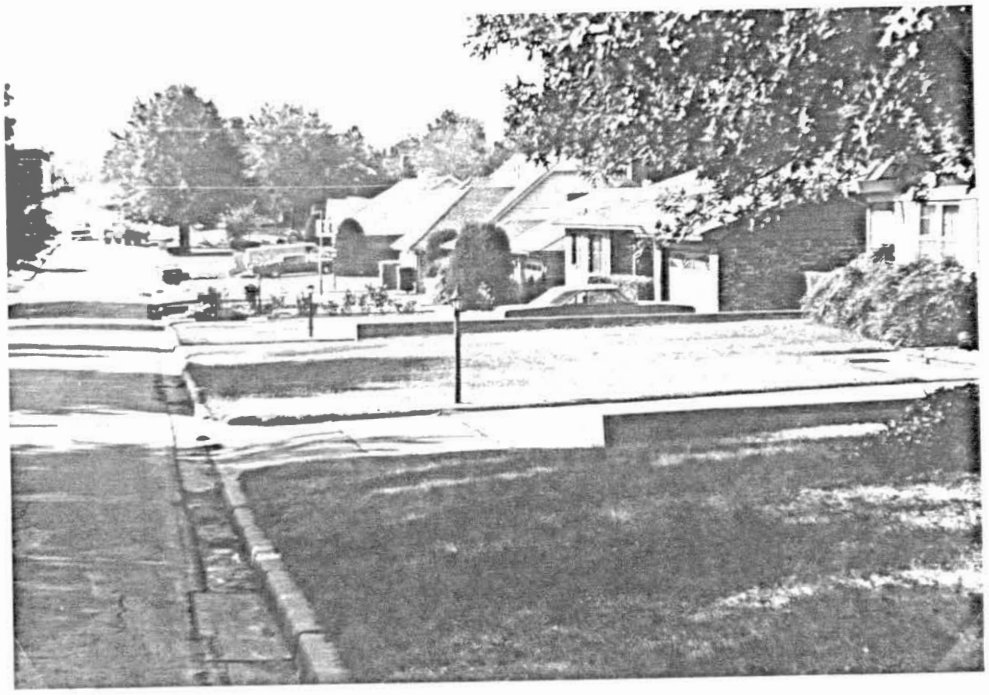

Figure 4. Typical Street in the Target Area

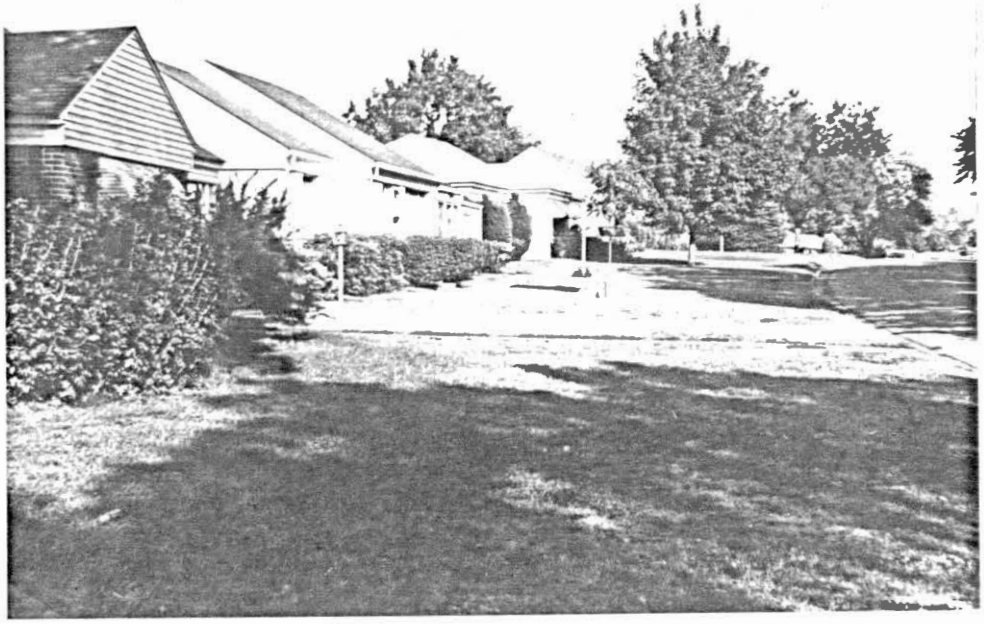

Figure 5. Typical Street in the Control Area

other three roads have little traffic, and are used for residential access rather than for through traffic. However, Hudson street, which forms the eastern boundary of the target area, does have a high traffic density. Apart from Hudson, the rest of the interior roads in the target area are similar to those in the control, i.e. residential access streets. The Broken Arrow Expressway, a major traffic artery, impinges upon both study areas. No on/off ramps of the expressway are found in either study area.

Summary

The two study areas are very similar in their socioeconomic and demographic structures. Both areas can be generally described as middle class neighborhoods of single family dwellings. They are both residentially stable, and contain a high proportion of long-term Tulsa residents. The family structures found in the two study areas also are fairly similar. Most families are either older, retired, couples and singles, or young-to-middle aged couples with children. The target area, however, has a slightly older age structure than the control area.

Both study areas are predominantly residential in nature. The main type of dwelling is the middle class, single family unit. There is a similar amount of commercial development in both areas. Although the target area has slightly more traffic on its border roads, both

areas have relatively low traffic counts in their interiors.

The data presented above indicate that the socioeconomic and demographic composition of the study areas are very similar. Field observations indicate that the built environments also are alike. Given these similarities, it would seem reasonable to use one study area as a control to measure the effects of the Alert Neighbors campaign.

CHAPTER IV

THE ALERT NEIGHBORS CAMPAIGN

Before going on to examine the impact of the Alert Neighbors crime prevention campaign, it is necessary to give some information on the aims and organization of the program.

The aim of the Alert Neighbors program is to prevent residential burglary. This objective is to be achieved through small, in-home neighborhood meetings, and the formation of 'block clubs'. These meetings are led by a trained volunteer and a police officer, and draw their participants from a very small, block level, area. During the meetings, the neighbors are made aware that crime can, and does, occur in their neighborhood. The meeting leader and police officer give information, and quote statistics, on crime in Tulsa as a whole, and the specific problems observed in the neighborhood. This includes making people aware of crimes that have occured in the area, and encouraging discussion of crime-related experiences among the participants.

Parts of the meetings are devoted to the distribution of burglary prevention literature, usually in the form of pamphlets and small booklets. This literature contains information on 'target hardening' strategies, such as

which is the most secure door lock to install. There is also advice on other security practices that can be used to help prevent burglary, such as leaving a light on when absent, and asking neighbors to watch over the house during prolonged absences.

Although the importance of good security practices is recognized, the program stresses that crime cannot be tackled by the individual. Participants in the Alert Neighbors program are made fully aware that crime must be tackled collectively. They are encouraged to keep a watch over their neighbors' houses, and to report anything they think suspicious to the police. The police officer gives advice and tips on how to witness and report a crime. In this way the residents can become the 'eyes and ears' of the police.

By organizing around block clubs, the residents can get to know each other better through social interaction in the meetings. By building up friendships between the residents, it is hoped to increase neighborhood cohesion, and develop a greater sense of community. The residents will then be more concerned with what goes on in their neighborhood, and so keep a better watch on their neighbors' houses, and be more willing to report suspicious activities to the police. By having neighbors meet one another, it also will be easier to recognize strangers in the neighborhood.

Operation ID is part of the program, in which valuable possessions are inscribed with the owner's social security number. This makes it harder to 'fence' the possession if stolen, and easier to return to its owner if recovered by the police. Alert Neighbor signs are posted throughout the area, to let any potential burglar know that the neighborhood is being watched (Figure 6). Throughout the meetings discussion of the various aspects of the program, and any problems that may arise, is encouraged by the leader.

Figure 6. An 'Alert Neighbors' Sign in the Target Area

CHAPTER V

COMPARISONS OF THE STUDY AREAS

Introduction

The aim of the Alert Neighbors program is to reduce residential burglary. This is to be done by increasing home security, in conjunction with encouraging watchfulness and concern among neighbors in an area. Therefore it would be expected that residents of the target area would have better security practices than the residents of the control area. The Alert Neighbors campaign encourages a collective response to crime, and the intention is to facilitate this by organizing block clubs and meetings. In this way, social interaction between neighbors can be increased, and a greater sense of community cohesion and cohesiveness can be fostered as people get to know each other. Therefore, it would be expected that there would be more social interaction, and a greater sense of community cohesion and identity, among residents in the target area than in the control area. Many crime prevention programs (and the Alert Neighbors is no exception) make participants aware that crime can, and does, occur in their neighborhood. This is so that participants will not develop a 'it won't happen to me'

attitude, and will actually act on advice given in the meetings. However, this tactic of motivating action can lead to 'vicarious victimization', and consequently increase fear (see Chapter 2). On the other hand, fear might be reduced as residents begin to feel that they are doing something positive to reduce their chances of victimization by actively participating in a crime prevention program. Therefore, it would be expected that there is a difference in the level of fear observed in the study areas. Also, it would be expected that residents in the target area would have a greater awareness of the crime problem than those in the control area.

As was stated above, the ultimate aim of the program is to reduce residential burglary. In the 17 months prior to the 1st of January 1982, the survey indicated that there were five incidents of burglary in the target area, and three incidents in the control area. During a five year period prior to the 1st of January 1982, there was one reported incident of burglary in each neighborhood. Although it is possible to say that there has been a 500 percent increase in burglary in the target area sample, and a 300 percent increase in the control sample between 1976 and 1982, these statistics are very misleading due to the large sampling error involved, and such problems as memory lapse, and 'telescoping', which may 'pull' events into the reporting period, when in reality they did not occur during this time. Therefore, it was decided not to

compare changes in the incidence of burglary in the study areas because of the questionable validity of the data concerned with burglary. However, it must be remembered that with a total of ten burglaries between 1976 and 1982 indicated by the survey, the two study areas probably have low burglary rates.

In the following chapter the two study areas will be compared with respect to the following: (1) security practices; (2) social characteristics-- this will include social interaction among neighbors, (neighborhood cohesiveness and neighborhood identity); and (3) fear and awareness of crime.

Comparison of Security Practices

Participation in the Alert Neighbors program was very high in the target neighborhood. Ninety two percent of the people surveyed said that they had participated in the program. The literature indicates that participation in crime prevention programs of all types is generally low. For example, Lavrakas and Herz (1982) found that only 10 percent of the people surveyed had participated in a crime prevention program. Although this latter figure represents the participating proportion of the whole population of a city , the high rate of participation in the target neighborhood remains impressive. As expected, hardly anyone in the control area had participated in the Alert Neighbors program. Therefore, the results reported

below are not invalidated by lack of participation in the target area.

The study areas show very few differences in the way that households have been 'target hardened' against burglary. All the houses had windows that could be secured in some way. The burglary prevention literature that was distributed to the 'Alert Neighbors' indicated that the dead lock is the most difficult lock to force open. Three quarters of the front doors in the target area had dead locks. However, an almost identical proportion of front doors in the control area also had dead locks. The majority of back doors in the target area (62.5 percent) were also fitted with deadlocks. A similar proportion of backdoors in the control neighborhood (67.5 precent) also had deadlocks. Most houses, in both areas, did not have a burglar alarm system. Only six houses in the target area sample, and three in the control area sample, have such a system.

The Alert Neighbors program stresses the importance of proper security practices when the house is to be left unoccupied. As the program relates to neighbors being alert, and cooperating with each other, the literature of the program states that residents should inform neighbors when their house is to be unoccupied for more than a few days. Also, the delivery of newspapers, mail, and so on, should not be stopped when the house is unoccupied. This is because as few people as possible should know of the

owners absence from home. Instead, it should be arranged that the owner leave a key with an 'Alert Neighbor', who can then pick up these deliveries.

Table VIII shows that almost all the people in the target area inform a neighbor when they are away for a few days. A vast majority of the residents in the target area (82.5 percent) said that they always inform a neighbor of their absence. However, the number of people who inform neighbors of their absence in the control area is almost identical to the numbers in the target area. No statistically significant difference exists between the two areas in this respect (Table VIII).

There is also no significant difference between the study areas in the proportion of people who leave a key with neighbors when the house is unoccupied for more than a few days (Table IX). Most people in the target area do not stop delivery of mail during their prolonged absences. Although slightly fewer people in the control area stop their mail, there is no statistically significant difference between the areas in this respect (Table X). About half the people, in both areas, stop newspaper deliveries during prolonged absences (Table XI).

In both areas, the proportion of people stopping the delivery of newspapers is higher than the proportion who stop their mail. This is probably because newspapers are out-of-date after one day , and thus nearly useless, while the same cannot be said of mail. It would, therefore,

TABLE VIII

PERCENT OF RESIDENTS WHO INFORM NEIGHBORS WHEN THEY GO AWAY FOR MORE THAN A FEW DAYS

	Target Area	Control Area
Always Inform Neighbors	82.5	75.0
Sometimes Inform Neighbors	12.5	15.0
Never Inform Neighbors	5.0	10.0

Chi Squared=0.900, p=0.6375, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

TABLE IX

PERCENT OF RESIDENTS WHO LEAVE A KEY WITH NEIGHBORS WHEN AWAY FOR MORE THAN A FEW DAYS, BY AREA

	Target Area	Control Area
Sometimes or Always Leave a key	72.5	45.0
Rarely Leave a key	27.5	55.0

Chi Squared=3.48, p=0.07, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

TABLE X

PERCENT OF RESIDENTS WHO STOP DELIVERIES OF MAIL WHEN AWAY FOR MORE THAN A FEW DAYS, BY AREA

	Target Area	Control Area
Always Stop the Mail	35.0	20.0
Rarely Stop the Mail	65.0	80.0

Chi Squared=2.26, p=0.13, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

TABLE XI

PERCENT OF RESIDENTS WHO STOP DELIVERIES OF NEWSPAPERS WHEN AWAY FOR MORE THAN A FEW DAYS, BY AREA

	Target Area	Control Area
Always Stop the Newspapers	52.5	45.0
Rarely Stop the Newspapers	47.5	55.0

Chi Squared=0.45, p=0.50, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

seem that, in both areas, people have opted for a practical solution with regard to mail and newspaper deliveries. While stopping the newspapers and not stopping the mail may be practical, the Alert Neighbors program says that deliveries of both should not be stopped. The behavior of the residents of both areas is so similar, with regard to deliveries, it can be concluded that people in the target area have opted for a practical solution to the problem of deliveries during absences. Little attention seems to have been given to the advice offered by the Alert Neighbors program with respect to deliveries.

According to research, one of the most effective ways of preventing burglary is to leave a light on when the house is unoccupied at night (Lavrakas, 1981). People in the target area are, therefore, advised to leave a light on if they go out at night. All but two of the people in the target area sample say that they do, in fact, leave a light on at night. However, everyone in the control area sample also leave their lights on at night.

Comparison of the Social Characteristics

One of the main aims of the Alert Neighbors campaign is to increase social interaction among small groups of neighbors. In this way a sense of community identity can be fostered, and the neighborhood can become more socially cohesive. This return to the "neighborliness of

neighbors" (Alert Neighbors Against Crime, 1982) will mean that alert neighbors will 'look out' for each other, and each other's property.

If this part of the program has been successful, then it would be expected that the people in the target area would have more friends in their neighborhood than the people in the control area. Examination of Tables XII and XIII shows that there is a lack of any statistically significant difference between the neighborhood friendship patterns reported in the two areas. The majority of the people in both areas have at least one or two friends living in the neighborhood. Most of these friends are seen on a daily basis, the remainder being seen one or more times a week (Table XIII). It would seem that neighborhood friends are seen on quite a regular basis. This is not surprising given the close proximity of friends within a neighborhood. Even so, quite a large proportion of people said that they had no friends at all in the neighborhood. However, when Table XIV is examined, it can be seen that all the people interviewed had at least one friend in Tulsa.

Given the aims of the Alert Neighbors program, it would be expected that people in the target neighborhood would have a closer relationship with their neighbors than those in the control area. However, there is no significant difference between the relationships people in either area have with their neighbors (Table XV). While

TABLE XII

PERCENT OF RESIDENTS WHO HAVE FRIENDS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, BY AREA

	Target Area	Control Area
No Friends	35.0	45.0
1 Friend	55.0	37.5
2 Friends	10.0	17.5

Chi Squared=2.26, p=0.27, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

TABLE XIII

HOW OFTEN NEIGHBORHOOD FRIENDS ARE SEEN, BY AREA (%)

	Target Area	Control Area
Seen Once a Day	53.3	46.7
Seen Less Than Once a Day But More Than Once a Month	43.3	50.0
Seen Once a Month	3.4	3.3

Chi Squared=0.28, p=0.60, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

TABLE XIV

PERCENT OF RESIDENTS WHO HAVE FRIENDS IN OTHER PARTS OF TULSA, BY AREA

	Target Area	Control Area
No Friends in Tulsa	7.5	12.5
1 Friend in Tulsa	62.5	50.0
More Than One Friend in Tulsa	30.0	37.5

Chi Squared=0.83, p=0.36, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

TABLE XV

RELATIONSHIP RESIDENTS HAVE WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS, BY AREA (%)

	Target Area	Control Area
Neighbors Constantly Calling Round	5.0	17.5
Neighbors Making Fairly Frequent Visits	55.0	42.5
Neighbors Keeping to Themselves	40.0	40.0

Chi Squared=3.41, p=0.18, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

few neighbors are continually calling round to see each other, most do make fairly frequent visits. Quite a large proportion of people in both areas reported that their neighbors keep to themselves unless specifically invited (40 percent of the residents in either area). If the Alert Neighbors campaign is working to produce greater social interaction among neighbors, it would be expected that less than 40 percent of the target area sample would perceive that their neighbors kept to themselves. Also it would be expected that this proportion would be lower in the control sample than target area sample.

From the information given in Chapter 3, the tentative conclusion can be reached that the majority of the residents, in both areas, fall into the middle socioeconomic class. Therefore, it would be expected that the majority of the resident sample would perceive their neighborhood as consisting of people similar to themselves. If this were the case, it would indicate that the residents were knowledgeable about the people in their neighborhood. Also, if a high proportion of people perceive that their neighborhood is composed of people similar to them, the conclusion can be reached that the neighborhood is a socially cohesive one. This is because a person will feel that he or she is surrounded by people with similar goals, problems, and outlook, and so not perceive that they are socially isolated or different, from their neighbors.

In the target area, it would, therefore, be expected that residents would perceive that the people living in their neighborhood were generally similar. This is because the Alert Neighbors program has attempted to increase social interaction between neighbors, making them more aware that they share common goals, problems, and outlooks. In this way neighborhood cohesion should be increased.

Preliminary examination of Table XVI indicates that the above expectations have been fulfilled for the target neighborhood. The vast majority of residents in the target area think that their neighborhood is composed of similar people, or generally similar people with some different types. It would also appear, at first glance, that there is a higher proportion of people with this perception in the target than control area. However, there is no statistically significant difference (at the 0.05 level) between the study areas in the way residents perceive the composition of their neighborhood. Using this indicator, it seems that there is no real difference between the social cohesion of the two study areas.

If the program has succeeded in increasing neighborhood cohesiveness and identity, it would be expected that people in the target area would have more positive attitudes towards the attractiveness of their neighborhood, and have a higher level of satisfaction with it, than people in the control area. Table XVII shows

TABLE XVI

HOW RESIDENTS REGARD THE COMPOSITION OF THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD, BY AREA (%)

	Target Area	Control Area
Regard the Neighborhood as Composed of People of Much the Same Type, or Generally Similar With Some Different Types	72.5	55.0
Regard the Neighborhood as Composed of Two or more Different Groups of People	27.5	45.0

Chi Squared=2.64, p=0.27, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

TABLE XVII

HOW RESIDENTS REGARD THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD, BY AREA (%)

	Target Area	Control Area
Regard Neighborhood as Very Attractive	30.8	57.5
Regard Neighborhood as Attractive	48.7	32.5
Regard Neighborhood as Averagely Attractive	20.5	10.0

Chi Squared=5.90, p=0.05, significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

that people in the control area generally do have a positive attitude towards the attractiveness of their neighborhood. Most rate their neighborhood as being very good or good. Only a few people rate it as average. When the study areas are compared for attitudes on attractiveness, there is a statistically significant difference. People in the control area sample rate their neighborhood more positively than those in the target area. Most people in the control area rated it as being very good, in terms of attractiveness. If the Alert Neighbors program has been successfully fostering neighborhood cohesion and identity, then the attitudes of residents in the target area towards neighborhood attractiveness should be more positive, or at least similar, than those in the control area. Despite these less positive attitudes found in the target neighborhood, there is no significant difference between the areas in the level of satisfaction people have with their neighborhood as a place to live (Table XVIII). Most people are very satisfied with their neighborhood as a place to live.

Another measure of neighborhood cohesion and identity is the attitudes that residents have about moving away from the neighborhood. When asked how they would feel if they had to move out of their neighborhood, almost all the residents in both areas said that they would be sorry to leave (Table XIX). Only three out of the 80 people interviewed said they would be pleased to move.

TABLE XVIII

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH NEIGHBORHOOD AS A PLACE TO LIVE, BY AREA (%)

	Target Area	Control Area
Very Satisfied	87.5	80.0
Quite Satisfied	7.5	12.5
Mixed Feelings	2.5	7.5
Unsatisfied	2.5	0.0

Chi Squared=2.63, p=0.43, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

TABLE XIX

ATTITUDES OF RESIDENTS IF THEY HAD TO MOVE AWAY FROM THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD, BY AREA (%)

	Target Area	Control Area
Would be Pleased to Move	2.9	5.0
Would be Sorry to Move	97.1	95.0

Chi Squared=0.22, p=0.64, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

Overall there is a relatively high level of social interaction, cohesion, and neighborhood identity found among the residents of both neighborhoods. Most residents did not express negative or antagonistic views towards their neighborhood as a place to live. Lack of real differences between the areas in terms of social interaction, cohesion, and identity indicates that the Alert Neighbors program is probably having little effect upon these aspects of neighborhood life.

Comparison of Crime Perceptions

As can be seen from Table XX, there is no difference between the study areas in the proportion of people who worry that they or a member of their family might be a victim of crime. Fifty five percent in the target area sample, and 59 percent in the control sample said that they worried about crime victimization. Over half of the people who worry about victimization said that this was only 'a bit of a worry' (Table XXI). Although the proportion of residents in the control area who only 'worry a bit' about victimization is higher than the proportion in the target area, there is not a statistically significant difference.

From the evidence above, it can be concluded that the levels of fear of criminal victimization are similar in both areas. Tables XXII and XXIII show the effect past victimization may have had upon the fear of crime. These

TABLE XX

PERCENT OF RESIDENTS WHO WORRY THAT THEY OR A MEMBER OF THEIR FAMILY MAY BECOME A VICTIM OF CRIME, BY AREA (%)

	Target Area	Control Area
Worry	55.0	58.9
Do Not Worry	45.0	41.1

Chi Squared=0.13, p=0.72, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

TABLE XXI

AMOUNT OF WORRY RESIDENTS HAVE ABOUT CRIMINAL VICTIMIZATION, BY AREA (%)

	Target Area	Control Area
Find Risk of Victimization a Big Worry	43.4	27.0
Find Risk of Victimization Only a Bit of a Worry	56.6	73.0

Chi Squared=1.47, p=0.22, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

TABLE XXII

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VICTIMIZATION AND FEAR OF CRIME IN THE TARGET AREA

	Victim of a Crime	Non-Victim
Number Who Worry About Victimization	13	10
Number Who do not Worry About Victimization	11	6

Chi Squared=0.36, p=0.60, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

TABLE XXIII

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VICTIMIZATION AND FEAR CRIME IN THE CONTROL AREA

	Victim of a Crime	Non-Victim
Number Who Worry About Victimization	13	8
Number Who do not Worry About Victimization	10	9

Chi Squared=0.36, p=0.06, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

tables give only a rough estimate of the relationship between victimization and fear because the victimizations refer only to the incidents of property crimes committed since 1977. The number of victimizations for both areas over this period was almost the same. In both areas, the relationship between victimization and crime follows the pattern observed in the literature. There is no strong relationship between victimization and crime-- a victim of crime is just as likely to be fearful of further victimization than not. Past victimization has had a similar effect on the levels of fear in both areas.

The literature indicates that the main cause of fear is the level of incivility found in an area. Indicators of incivility include abandoned and run down buildings, evidence of vandalism, and groups of teenagers making a nuisance of themselves. Visual inspection of the two study areas indicates that there are hardly any rundown or abandoned buildings in either area. Tables XXIV and XXV indicate that very few people, in either area, think that vandalism or groups of teenagers making a nuisance of themselves are very common in their area. Some 90 percent, or more, of the respondents in either area thought that these two indicators of incivility were uncommon occurrences in their area.

Given the same level of incivility and victimization in each area, it would be expected that the residents would possess the same degree of fear. However, also

TABLE XXIV

HOW RESIDENTS PERCEIVE THE INCIDENCE OF VANDALISM IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD, BY AREA (%)

	Target Area	Control Area
Think it is a Common Occurrence	10.0	10.3
Think it is Not a Common Occurrence	90.0	89.7

Chi Squared=0.001, p=0.97, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

TABLE XXV

HOW RESIDENTS PERCEIVE THE INCIDENCE OF GROUPS OF TEENAGERS MAKING A NUISANCE OF THEMSELVES IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD, BY AREA (%)

	Target Area	Control Area
Think it is a Common Occurrence	7.5	7.9
Think it is Not a Very Common Occurrence	92.5	92.1

Chi Squared=0.004, p=0.96, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

given that residents in the target area had been told, through the Alert Neighbors program, that crime can, and does, occur in their neighborhood, then some differences would be expected between the levels of fear in the study areas. The program could have had a negative effect on fear because discussion of crime could have caused vicarious victimization in the participants. On the other hand, there could have been a positive effect upon fear. By participating in the program, people could begin to feel that they were doing something to lessen their chances of criminal victimization. It would seem that the Alert Neighbors program has had either little effect upon fear in the target area, or that the positive and negative aspects of the program had cancelled themselves out.

As was stated above, one of the aims of the program is to make participants aware that burglary, and other crimes, are on the increase. For example, a memo from the Tulsa Citizens Crime Commission to the Alert Neighbors program states that burglary increased in Tulsa 19 percent between 1982 and 1983. This part of the program seems to have been successful as far as burglary is concerned. Eighty-two percent of the residents in the target area sample, compared to 42 precent in the control sample, thought that the incidence of burglary had increased since 1977 (Table XXVI). Far fewer people in the target area also thought that the incidence of burglary was the same as in 1977, or did not know if there had been a change or

TABLE XXVI

HOW RESIDENTS PERCEIVE THE CHANGE IN THE INCIDENCE OF BURGLARY IN THEIR AREA SINCE 1977 (%)

	Target Area	Control Area
Think Incidence is More Common	82.5	42.5
Think Incidence is the Same	2.5	27.5
Don't Know	15.0	30.0

Chi Squared=15.45, p=0.0004, significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

not. Therefore it would appear that people in the target area were more aware of the increase in burglary.

Given the results above, it may be concluded that there is no significant difference between the residents of the study areas in how they perceive the current rate of burglary in their area (Table XXVII). Most people sampled think that burglary is not a common occurrence in their area. The results of the survey indicate that the burglary rates in both areas are not significantly different. There were five and three burglaries in the target and control areas respectively during a 17 month period since January, 1982. However, it must be remembered that this rate is open to substantial sampling error due to the small numbers involved. Given this lack of difference in burglary rates between the areas, the observed lack of differences in the sample residents perception of their areas' burglary rate is not to surprising. It would seem that by telling people in the target area that 'crime can, and does, occur in their neighborhood' has had little impact upon their perceptions of the incidence of burglary in their area. Alternatively, the program could have counteracted the effects of making people aware that burglary is on the increase by also making them aware that the program could, and would, prevent burglary.

When residents' perceptions of the incidence of vandalism and mugging are compared, no significant

TABLE XXVII

HOW RESIDENTS PERCEIVE THE PRESENT INCIDENCE OF BURGLARY IN THEIR AREA (%)

	Target Area	Control Area
Think the Incidence is Very Common	17.5	27.5
Think the Incidence is not Very Common	72.5	57.5
Don't Know	10.0	15.0

Chi Squared=1.98, p=0.37, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

differences arise. Most of the residents in both samples think that vandalism and mugging are uncommon occurrences in their areas (Tables XXIV and XXVIII). There are also no significant differences between the areas in how people perceive changes in the incidence of stolen cars, vandalism, and mugging over the last five years. (Tables XXIX, XXX, and XXXI). Generally, the residents thought that the incidence of these crimes was the same as five years ago. There is a weak tendency for more residents in the target area to think that the incidence of these crimes was more common now than five years ago. Also less people in the target area responded with "don't know" when asked to compare the incidence of these crimes. However, both these tendencies were statistically insignificant.

The Alert Neighbors program seems to have had little effect, if any, on how people view the incidence of crimes other than burglary. This is not too surprising considering the program was mainly concerned with burglary.

TABLE XXVIII

HOW RESIDENTS PERCEIVE THE PRESENT INCIDENCE OF MUGGINGS AND STREET ROBBERY IN THEIR AREA (%)

	Target Area	Control Area
Think Incidence is Fairly Common	0.0	2.5
Think Incidence is Not Very Common	87.5	97.5
Don't Know	12.5	5.0

Chi Squared=2.34, p=0.31, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

TABLE XXIX

HOW RESIDENTS PERCEIVE THE CHANGES IN THE INCIDENCE OF STOLEN CARS IN THEIR AREA SINCE 1977 (%)

	Target Area	Control Area
Think Incidence is More Common	17.5	5.0
Think Incidence is the Same	52.5	50.0
Don't Know	30.0	45.0

Chi Squared=4.00, p=0.14, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

TABLE XXX

HOW RESIDENTS PERCEIVE THE CHANGES IN THE INCIDENCE OF VANDALISM IN THEIR AREA SINCE 1977 (%)

	Target Area	Control Area
Think Incidence is More Common	30.0	15.0
Think Incidence is the Same	57.5	62.5
Don't Know	12.5	22.5

Chi Squared=3.23, p=0.20, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

TABLE XXXI

HOW RESIDENTS PERCEIVE THE CHANGES IN THE INCIDENCE OF MUGGINGS AND STREET ROBBERY IN THEIR AREA SINCE 1977 (%)

	Target Area	Control Area
Think Incidence is More Common	5.0	5.0
Think Incidence is the Same	75.0	72.0
Don't Know	20.0	22.5

Chi Squared=0.8, p=0.96, not significant at the 0.05 level.

Note: 1982 Survey. Analysis based on data frequencies.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Aims and Research Procedure

The Alert Neighbors crime prevention program is aimed at preventing residential burglary. In order to do this the program has established block clubs composed of residents drawn from a block level area. In these meetings the participants are made aware that crime can, and does, occur in their neighborhood, and are informed of the appropriate security practices which will help lessen the chances of their property being burglarized. By organizing block clubs and meetings, it is hoped that the residents of a neighborhood will get to know each other better through social interaction. In this way a greater sense of community identity can be fostered, and community identity increased. Residents will then become more concerned with what goes on in their neighborhood, and more willing to look out for, and report, suspicious behavior in their neighborhood.

The impact of the Alert Neighbors program upon security practices, social characteristics, and perceptions of crime in a quarter square mile area of Tulsa was investigated. The social characteristics

studied were social interaction between neighbors, neighborhood cohesion, and neighborhood identity. In order to do this, an area that had participated in the program was compared to a control area that had not participated. Field observations and survey sample data indicated that the two areas had similar built environments, socioeconomic composition, and demographic structure. These three factors have been mentioned in the literature as important determinants of crime and fear in an area. Because of the lack of differences in these factors between the areas, it was concluded that it was valid to use one as a control to measure the effects of the program on the target area.

Summary of Findings and Discussion

It was found that there was very little difference between the security practices of the resident samples from both areas. Most of the homes surveyed were 'target hardened' against burglary to about the same degree. The target hardening strategies used in most houses surveyed consisted of relatively simple, straight forward features, such as dead bolt door locks, and windows that could be secured in some way. Very few households had installed expensive anti-burglary devices, such as burglar alarms. There was also very little difference between the residents in both areas with regard to their security practices when the house was unoccupied. The majority of

all the respondents informed their neighbors when the house was to be unoccupied for more than a few days. During absences of a week or more, a similar proportion of the resident sample in both areas stopped deliveries of mail and newspapers. This occurred in spite of a program informing residents in the target area that these deliveries should not be stopped and should be collected by neighbors. Almost all of the residents surveyed in both areas left a light on in their house if they went out at night.

It can be concluded that the Alert Neighbors program has had little direct effect upon the security practices in the target area. Security practices in the target area generally followed the same pattern as those in the control area. Most of the security practices mentioned in the campaign were relatively simple, straight-forward, common-sense practices which most residents would probably employ anyway. To most people it is probably a matter of common-sense to leave a light on at night, tell neighbors when they are going away, and to install secure door and window locks. Therefore, telling people to use these security practices is probably going to have little impact because they are probably already being used, at least in the socioeconomic environment examined here. As Lavrakas (1981) argued, householders have a relatively high financial and psychological investment in their homes, and so are highly motivated to employ sound security

practices. Nearly all of the houses surveyed were owner-occupied, and so there is already the motivation to employ the security practices mentioned by the Alert Neighbors progam.

The social character of both areas was very similar. The target and control area samples exhibited the same levels of social interaction among neighbors, neighborhood cohesiveness, and neighborhood identity. Both areas displayed a relatively low level of social interaction between neighbors. Forty percent of the sample in each area perceived that their neighbors kept to themselves. Also, about half of the respondents, in both areas, indicated that they had no friends in the neighborhood. Both areas rated a little higher on neighborhood cohesion and identity. In both areas, the majority of the respondents perceived that their neighborhood was composed of people of much the same type. Most of the residents sampled had a high level of satisfaction with their neighborhood as a place to live, thought that it was attractive, and would be sorry if they had to move away from their neighborhood.

It can therefore be concluded that the Alert Neighbors program probably had little effect upon social interaction, neighborhood cohesiveness, and neighborhood identity in the target area. If the program was working to produce greater social interaction and cohesiveness amongst groups of neighbors, it would be expected that a

smaller proportion than 40 percent of the target sample would perceive that their neighbors kept to themselves. It would also be expected that a greater proportion than half of the target sample would have friends in the neighborhood. However, no absolute standards are available against which to judge these data.

Social characteristics, such as social interaction, and neighborhood cohesiveness and identity, are relatively complex phenomena. It is somewhat unrealistic to expect that a program organized around preventing one specific crime, and holding about one meeting per month, will have any significant impact upon these characteristics. Crime is but one issue that is of concern to many residents in a neighborhood. The results of the survey indicate that many people do not worry about the possibility of becoming a victim of crime. Residents also are concerned about such things as the quality of municipal urban services, the quality of their children's education, noisy neighbors, and neighbors who do not maintain their property. A multi-issue organization may have a greater impact upon the social characteristics of a neighborhood. An organization dealing with a broad range of issues is more likely to improve social interaction among neighbors, neighborhood cohesiveness, and neighborhood interaction compared to a single issue program. In this way the social characteristics that can help prevent crime can be fostered. However, it is even questionable whether a

multi-issue program will have much impact upon social characteristics. The highly mobile nature of society in the United States means that friendship patterns are scattered over a wide area rather than confined to a neighborhood.

One of the aims of the Alert Neighbors program was to make people aware that the burglary rate was on the increase. In this respect the program has been successful. Far more people in the target area sample than in the control sample thought that the incidence of burglary in their area had increased since 1977. In other categories of crime, such as mugging and vandalism, there was no difference in how both resident samples perceived the change in their rates since 1977. This is not surprising since the Alert Neighbors program was mainly concerned with burglary.

Another aim of the program was to make people aware that burglary can, and does, occur in their neighborhood. However, there was no difference between the study areas in how the respondents perceived the present incidence of crime in their area. Most of the people sampled thought that burglary was not a common incident in their area. Although it would seem that the program has failed in achieving the aim of making people aware of their risk of victimization, it will be argued below that this may be considered a positive effect of the program.

The level of the fear of crime in both areas was comparable. The fact that the program has had little apparent effect upon fear, and perceptions of the current incidence of burglary, can be construed as a positive effect of the program. Norton and Courlander (1982) noted that some crime prevention programs tended to increase the fear of crime by promoting 'vicarious victimization' in the participants. The Alert Neighbors program does not seem to have had an effect upon fear or perceptions of the current incidence of burglary. It can be speculated that the negative effect of making participants aware of their risk of victimization has been counteracted by the positive effect of also making them aware that they are participating in a program that decreases their risk of victimization. However, the program studied by Norton and Courlander inadvertently made its participants more security conscious by increasing their fear. There was, therefore, a strong correlation between increased security practice and fear. The Alert Neighbors has had little effect upon security practices, and so it can also be speculated that there has been a general apathy towards most of the crime information given in the program. Further research is needed to prove or disprove this contention.

The Alert Neighbors program has had little effect upon (a) the security practices, (b) social characteristics and, (c) the level of fear in the study

area. Whether the latter was due to apathy towards the program, or was a positive effect, is difficult to discern with the data available. There seems to have been some effect upon crime awareness in the target area as most of the respondents perceived that burglary had increased in their area since 1977.

The ultimate proof of the effectiveness of the program is to measure the effect it has had upon crime, especially burglary. The lack of suitable data made investigation of changes in the incidence of crime inappropriate. A suggestion for further research would be to measure changes in the crime rate before, during, and after the program for the whole target area, and not just part of it.

It must be remembered that the data for this study were obtained in 1982 when the program was in the second year of its three year duration. Another area of further research would be to repeat this study a few years after the program had ended to see if changes in security practices, social characteristics, and crime awareness had occurred.

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