

Community variation in the nature of crime reporting

Ph.D Dissertation

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Abstract

This dissertation examines how community characteristics shape the reporting of incidents of serious interpersonal violence. Using a unique multilevel victimization dataset constructed from a variety of sources, the study draws from a wide array of theoretical perspectives to construct and test several hypotheses regarding the effects of neighborhood and city conditions on multiple facets of victim and third party crime reporting behaviors. Of particular interest are the effects on reporting of static and dynamic neighborhood-level structural conditions and city-level police involvement in community oriented policing (COP). In addition to main effects, the research also explores numerous cross-level interactions. Consistent with prior studies (e.g., Baumer, 2002), the findings generally suggest that neighborhood-level structural conditions exert little influence on the nature of crime reporting behavior. However, the findings reveal that police notification is less likely in neighborhoods characterized by unstable or increasingly unstable residential populations. The study also reveals that while police involvement in community oriented policing significantly influences the likelihood victim and third party crime reporting behaviors, the nature of COP's influence on reporting appears to vary across neighborhoods. Lastly, the strengths and limitations of the research as well as the implications of its findings are discussed.