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*Case Study of “Hot-Spot” Apartment Complexes in North Central Indianapolis**

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ABSTRACT

This case study focused on a defined apartment complex hot spot, which includes apartment complexes receiving Section 8 funding, in the north-central region of Indianapolis, Indiana. The study identified social, environmental, and management characteristics possibly associated with concentrated levels of crime at Section 8 apartment complexes. As previous studies have shown, crime is concentrated at a few apartment complexes with a number of common characteristics such as a large minority population and a large amount of litter at the complex. In addition, a perspective of the effectiveness of hot-spot policing was obtained from beat officers who are familiar with the neighborhood with the targeted apartment complexes. A community survey was utilized to assess the current perspective of the apartment complex residents toward current policing tactics as well as their perception of safety. It was hypothesized that law-abiding citizens will be supportive of current and future measures to reduce crime in their neighborhood. Apartment complex residents who fear for themselves and their loved ones were at least moderately supportive of hot-spot policing. The multiple methods utilized contribute to the existing literature and lead to promising directions to consider for additional hot-spot research.

KEY WORDS Crime; Hot spot; Apartment; Community policing

This case study focused on an apartment complex hot spot with five apartment complexes receiving Section 8 funding in Indianapolis. The Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) north district is representative of the city of Indianapolis because of its population. The study focused on two main research questions: (1) What environmental, social, and management characteristics contribute to the concentration of crime at Section 8 apartment complexes? (2) Are the apartment complex communities supportive of the current policing measures to reduce crime?

* I thank the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, especially the north district neighborhood resource unit and crime reduction team and patrol officer interviewees for contributing to the case study. Without the north district’s assistance of escorts, ride-alongs, and personal perspectives, this study would not have been possible. This study was enhanced with the assistance from the assistant chief of housing and the crime analyst. The apartment complex communities are wholeheartedly thanked.

A subsequent research question examined if supportive apartment tenants are more or less likely to fear for their safety.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Place-Based Crime Theories

One perspective, “broken windows,” implies that the physical signs of disorder, such as litter, graffiti, and a general lack of upkeep of a facility or place, increase the likelihood of criminal activity. According to the “broken windows” theory, signs of disorder in an urban community signal to offenders that a neighborhood is unable to exert social control (Paris, Greenberg, and Rhoie 1984); thus, various law-enforcement efforts focused on public disorder, such as a lack of adequate apartment complex lighting and nuisance violations, may prevent some serious crimes (Boydstrum 1975; Wilson and Boland 1978; Pate et al. 1985; Sherman 1986; Sampson and Cohen 1988; Kelling and Coles 1996).

Three additional theories provide background to the place-based crime phenomenon. Rational choice, routine-activity theory, and crime-pattern theory have been influential to the understanding of the role of place in crime-prevention efforts (Eck and Weisburd 1995). The rational-choice perspective provides the basis for understanding the importance of place in the criminological context, because it implies that offenders select targets and determine a method to achieve their goals in an explainable manner (Cornish and Clarke 1986). Parsons (1951) and others claim this perspective remains untestable, yet others claim that the potential exists to test different forms of rationale (Hogarth and Reder 1981).

Routine-activity theory attempts to explain crime events and how they are affected by several circumstances (Cohen and Felson 1979; Felson 1986, 1994). For a criminal event to occur, there must be a motivated offender. In addition, a desirable target from the point of view of an offender must exist. Because criminal events do not transpire randomly, both the motivated offender and the target must be at the same place at the same time. The final element of the theory claims that all types of controllers—intimate handlers, guardians, and place managers—remain ineffective or absent (Eck and Weisburd 1995).

Crime-pattern theory combines rational choice and routine-activity theory to explain crime distribution across places. Rational offenders, while involved in routine activities, will be aware of places absent of handlers. Crime-pattern theory examines the interventions of criminals with their social and physical environments, which influence their target choices (Eck and Weisburd 1995).

Apartment Complexes as Hot Spots

Eck and his colleagues defined an apartment complex as “a grouping of physically contiguous apartment land parcels owned by the same person or entity” (2009:13). For apartment complexes, physical characteristics and management practices influence the likelihood of criminal occurrences. The socioeconomic characteristics of a neighborhood are also associated with the likelihood of criminal activities occurring. Disadvantaged neighborhoods, such as apartment complexes with Section 8 residents, seem to attract more crime and disorder.

The majority of research on private apartment complexes has included experiments testing whether police-led interventions that cooperate with property owners can effectively reduce crime levels (Hope 1994; Green 1995; Eck 1997; Clarke and Bichler-Robertson 1998; Sampson and Scott 1999). The specific management practices that contribute to the concentration of criminal activity in a few apartment complexes remains unknown; however, lease provisions and the manager's willingness to evict problem residents have been implied in previous studies (Clarke and Bichler-Robertson 1998; Eck 1994).

Missing Pieces to the Puzzle of Hot Spots

Although an extensive amount of literature and research exists on hot spots, there are limitations with the available research, and questions remain unanswered. For starters, identifying hot spots for crime-prevention efforts is going to be beneficial only if the past repeats. Even though the randomized experiment remains the gold standard for evaluating police interventions, limitations exist. In reviews of evaluations of experiments that focus on hot spots, flaws in the methods and statistical errors have been reported.

Police departments may introduce additional drawbacks to researching hot spots or hot apartments. Some police forces possess limited manpower and do not have the means to effectively carry out an experiment. In addition, some police forces lack the technology, finances, or both to carry out an intervention targeting hot spots. Some police officers remain trapped in the traditional mindset and are reluctant to participate in problem-solving-oriented or intelligence-led policing.

A number of gaps in crime-places and hot-spots literature exist. The extent of displacement and diffusion of benefits effects remains unknown. The crime-prevention tactics that work best for specific crimes at specific places remain inadequately investigated. The perceptions of citizens in multiple communities regarding the effectiveness of hot-spot policing and their perception of safety need to be investigated. Although the ability of police officers to identify hot spots (see Haining and Law 2007; McLaughlin et al. 2007) has been studied, their perception of overall hot-spot policing effectiveness and of targeting specific places has not been adequately examined.

CASE STUDY OF HOT APARTMENTS

Within the north district, a hot spot, including a handful of apartment complexes receiving Section 8 funding and a few non-Section 8 apartment complexes, has been defined as the North West apartment complex hot spot. The apartment complex hot spot is located in north district beats 73 and 74. Beat 73 (ND) includes just less than 4.5 square miles and possesses a population of 15,233. Beat 74 (ND) is comprised of 5.7 square miles, with a population of 12,854 persons (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000, Modified November 2010). The apartment complex hot spot is responsible for a significant number of incident reports and calls for service. This study focused on four Section 8 apartment complexes in the beats of interest. The apartment complexes in the study are identified as Apartment Complexes A, B, C, and C.1.

In the vicinity of the North West apartment complex hot spot, a number of issues are inundating police resources. From June 1, 2010, to July 31, 2010, there were a total of 521 responses to calls for service in a 0.33-square-mile area. Of the 521 responses to calls for service, 148 of them came from Apartment Complex B and 104 calls were from Apartment Complex A.

Beat 73 (ND) and 74(ND) apartments are densely populated with a diverse population of Hispanics and African Americans, creating a language barrier for effective community policing. Another major issue with the apartment complexes is the rising gang issue (Data retrieved from CrimeView database geocoded dataset of Tiburon Incident Reports, the Access Gang Database, the Grand Jury List, and the JUSTIS data warehouse). This study contributes to the current hot-spot literature and crime-reduction planning efforts for Beats 73 (ND) and 74 (ND).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research question 1. What environmental, social, and management characteristics contribute to the crime rate at apartments that accept Section 8 tenants in Indianapolis, Indiana?

Research question 2. Are the apartment complex communities supportive of the current policing tactics in their neighborhoods? Are supportive residents more or less likely to fear for their safety in their neighborhood?

Hypothesis 1 (H1). The hypothesis is that crime will be concentrated at apartment complexes where a number of social, environmental, and management variables influence crime.

Hypothesis 2 (H2). The hypothesis is that the neighborhood will be supportive of current and future crime prevention. However, the possibility of an adverse reaction from the poor, minorities (which constitute a significant proportion of the population) of the apartment complexes under investigation, due to the perception of minorities feeling singled out from the rest of the community cannot be discounted. In addition, the current climate between the IMPD and the city of Indianapolis is unfavorable because of the current questioning of the legitimacy and integrity of the organization.

METHODOLOGY

Triangulation was utilized with a mix of quantitative and qualitative data. The triangulation method provides a more accurate picture of the social phenomenon because different aspects are viewed from more than one angle. The goal of this study was to identify a more complete picture of the effectiveness of hot-spot policing by utilizing crime-rate data, apartment complex residents' perspectives, and beat officers' perspectives. In addition, three variables—environmental, social, and management—were observed during the observational ride-alongs.

Qualitative

Because hot-spot policing is a concept but there exists an extensive amount of literature and it is known that the IMPD utilizes hot-spot policing, the researcher's first goal was to find out if patrol officers believe in hot-spot policing. Thus, the first guiding question was, Do IMPD officers believe in the concept of hot-spot policing, and, if so, from their perspective, is it effective? The second guiding question examines apartment complexes as hot spots and the effectiveness of hot-spot policing. Guiding question number asks, Is hot-spot policing effective

for apartment complexes and, more specifically, for the hot spot? Third, from the perspective of patrol officers, what are the limitations and benefits of hot-spot policing?

Quantitative

Independent variables. Environmental characteristics (H1) for the apartment complexes included the physical structures of the complexes as well as individual units. The physical-structure characteristics of the apartment complexes included security features, noise and activity level, and construction. Environmental characteristics studied during the observational ride-alongs included but were not limited to boundary attributes, complex enclosures, people loitering outside the complex, and litter.

For this study, social characteristics (H1) included commentary made by officers during the observational ride-alongs and the demographics of the area of the apartment complex hot spot. This research investigated the effects of demographics of residents on the high volume of crime incidents and calls for service at the apartment complex hot spot. Eck (2002) highlighted that place managers control the characteristics of places, including the security features of a location. When compared to characteristics of crime places with a lower prevalence of crime, places with concentrated crime generally lack on-site management, lax enforcement, and fewer rules (Eck, Clarke, and Guerette 2007). The cooperation of the management of Apartment Complexes A, B, C, and C.1 to work with the researcher and police officers was the main focus for the management variable.

Dependent variables. In this study, crime rate (H1) is operationally used as a dependent variable when assessing the characteristics contributing to the crime rate. The crime rates of three out of the four apartment complexes in this study were compared to the beat (73 ND and 74 ND) and the north district crime rates. This study focuses exclusively on the rates of detection.

From the point of view of beat officers, the perception of the effectiveness of the targeted, focused enforcement at the apartment complexes was qualitatively analyzed. This assists in determining the overall apartment complex targeted policing and police department climate. Additional research may further link these variables and measure differing levels of association between the variables and the crime rate specifically at hot apartment complexes or other places. In addition, the perceived safety of apartment complex residents and their level of support for the targeted policing efforts (H2) were quantitatively analyzed.

Hot apartment complexes. Because of the lack of cooperation with the property management from Apartment Complex A for the community surveys, two additional Section 8 apartment complexes in the hot spot were included in the study, identified as Apartment Complex C and Apartment Complex C.1. Observations were made at these two additional apartment complexes while the community surveys were conducted. Apartment Complex C.1 is unique to other apartment complexes because of the large population of elderly and disabled persons.

Apartment complex tenants. Fifty-one residents from the apartment complexes participated. Only one subject per apartment unit participated. All subjects were at least 18 years old and had lived at the apartment complex for at least one month. Some subjects (13.7 percent) participated with residency of less than six months. In addition, 17.6 percent of the participants did not provide the length of their residency. Because of the small sample size, those whose

residency remained unknown and those residing for less than six months were included in the analysis. Systematic sampling of every second apartment complex unit was used. Data was collected by adhering to stringent protection of the participants' confidentiality and anonymity.

North District beat officers. Three beat officers who patrol Beats 73(ND) and 74 (ND) participated. A purposive sample of officers familiar with the North West apartment complex hot spot were requested to participate. Typically, with the north district, one officer is assigned per beat for each shift. Although these officers are not representative of the north district or IMPD, they are representative of the officers involved in the crime-prevention efforts of the hot spot. The same structured interview questions were administered to each officer. The data was collected by adhering to stringent protection of the subjects' confidentiality and anonymity.

PROCEDURE

Observational Ride-alongs

A mid-level supervisor assisted with scheduling the ride-alongs with beat officers assigned to work in Beats 73 (ND) and 74 (ND). Three observational ride-alongs of Beats 73 (ND) and 74 (ND) and the apartment complexes were conducted. The ride-alongs occurred during daylight hours so physical and environmental characteristics could be noted. The observational ride-alongs occurred for approximately three to four hours. The observational ride-alongs occurred on a Monday, on a Thursday afternoon, and on a Saturday from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Quantitative data, such as the number of large potholes and pieces of litter larger than two inches were gathered. During the ride-alongs, the beat officers provided interesting information regarding their experiences with the apartment complexes under investigation and with nearby neighborhoods. An implied-consent form was read by the beat officers prior to the researcher collecting observational data.

Community Surveys

After the observational ride-alongs were conducted, community surveys were administered. To decrease bias, officer escorts stayed outside of the apartment buildings in patrol cars. Community surveys were conducted exclusively at Apartment Complex B on four of the six days they were administered; thus, the sample results underrepresent Apartment Complexes C and C.1. On the last two days, community surveys were administered at Apartment Complexes B, C, and C.1. Community surveys were administered on three Mondays. In addition, community surveys were conducted on two Thursdays. A community survey was conducted on one Saturday from approximately 10:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Although there may have been more residents at home, and thus a potentially higher response rate, at night, because of safety concerns, community surveys were conducted only during daylight. Also, Latinos (with the exception of two participants) were able to participate only via translation. The community survey was designed to measure the communities' perception of the police officers' effectiveness and of safety.

Because of the small sample size, the responses of the community surveys from all apartment complexes were analyzed collectively. To see if a relationship exists between the variables, an inter-item correlation matrix was created with SPSS. Cross-tabulation tables and corresponding bar graphs were created to analyze the averages of the scale questions for the

perspective of policing effectiveness and the perspective of community safety. The three scale questions for the perspective of policing effectiveness and the perspective of community safety were averaged separately based on the residents' demographic responses. Community surveys with incomplete scale questions were excluded. Some error is associated with the perception of community safety scale because the question regarding residents feeling safe walking alone at night in their neighborhood is on a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 meaning very safe and 4 very unsafe while all of the other questions were on a scale of 1 to 5.

Beat Officer Interviews

Beat officers who patrolled Beats 73 (ND) and 74 (ND) were interviewed in person. All of the beat officers interviewed were familiar with the apartment complexes. Three of the four officers recommended to participate in the interviews were willing and able to participate. The interviews were semi-structured, and emphasis was placed on the interviewees developing from their points of interest. The length of each interview varied, with the shortest lasting approximately 12 minutes and the longest about one and a half hours. To maintain anonymity of the patrol officers, the first interviewee is identified as Officer 1, the second is identified as Officer 2, and the third is identified as Officer 3. The interview questions included demographic data, perceptions of hot-spot policing, and hot-spot policing's effect on crime.

FINDINGS

Observational Ride-alongs

During the ride-alongs, as officers pointed out apartment complexes near the hot spot with little or no calls for service, the premise that crime is concentrated at a few apartment complexes was reinforced. This is highly consistent with literature on hot spots. As believed, multiple characteristics of the apartment complexes, such as the number of large trash items and potholes observed and the management, contribute to crime rates. During the study, it was revealed that different demographic characteristics influence how crime is perceived. For example, a Latino survey participant expressed that Latinos normally associate with other Latinos and were concerned with maintenance and not the safety of Apartment Complex C. It remains unknown how differences in demographic characteristics influence the actual crime rate at the apartment complexes in the study.

Because of the inconsistency of the observations made of the apartment complex management, it remains unknown how the crime rate is influenced by management. To highlight, complete opposite reactions from management were received by the apartment complexes in the hot spot with the highest crime rate (and two of the largest complexes). Apartment Complex A was not supportive of or cooperative about the community surveys. In contrast, the on-site management of Apartment Complex B was completely supportive of the community survey. Apartment Complex C management cooperated by permitting the community surveys to be conducted but was not as supportive as Apartment Complex B.

There were a limited number of security measures observed at the apartment complexes. In particular, Apartment Complex A required parking decals and enforced towing of unauthorized vehicles. Apartment Complex B increased its sense of security by hiring a special deputy. Apartment Complex C installed a security camera and a guard shack, but it was utilized only

during the week or certain hours of the day, providing a false sense of security. Individual apartment units possessed security systems, such as ADT. The number of individual security systems at an entire apartment complex may be associated with the crime level; however, the observation of modern security systems does not account for other security measures that residents may utilize, such as having a dog or talking with and building a relationship with the beat officer.

Quantitative data. Quantitative data for the observational ride-alongs concentrate on Apartment Complexes A and B. Observations made at other apartment complexes in the hot spot and directly outside of the hot spot create a more complete picture of the environmental factors influencing the high crime rate, such as the wooded path providing concealment for offenders. Some of the quantitative observations for the apartment complexes remained the same during the three ride-alongs; however, some of the data changed, such as the number of large trash items or litter. Both of the apartment complex boundaries included a street. In addition, Apartment Complex A bordered another apartment complex. Wooden boards of fences and gaps in the chain-link fences observed at the apartment complexes provided evidence that the fences did not slow down individuals moving on foot from one apartment complex to the next one.

There is a degree of error associated with quantitative data observed. In particular, difficulty arises in counting the number of streetlights and litter, because of data collection occurring in a moving vehicle, the possibility of being interrupted with calls for service, or other required duties of the patrol officer. The amount of litter larger than two inches observed was associated with the day of the week and whether or not trash had been collected by the trash-disposal company.

The measures from the observational ride-alongs were divided into two variable categories: the accessibility variable and the image variable. The accessibility variable includes corner lot, unit access, complex access, secure complex, and number of entrances measures. The corner-lot measure depicts whether the apartment complex was located on a corner lot at an intersection of two streets. This measure was coded as either yes or no. The unit-access measure denotes whether residents access through the interior or exterior. The higher the complex-access measure, the greater the accessibility. The secure-complex measure depicts whether the apartment complex was secured by a swipe card, key, security guard, call box, or other security measure. The secure-complex measure is coded as yes or no. A yes indicates that a complex was secured by at least one security measure. The number-of-entrances measure indicates the number of distinct entries into the apartment complex (Eck et al. 2009).

The image variable includes the incivilities measure, loiter, and signage. The incivilities measure includes the count of exterior litter, the count of large trash, alcoholic drink containers, and whether communal trash bins were overflowing. The highest individual incivility measure (8.5) was on October 30, 2010, at Apartment Complex B. The measure for loiter notes whether there were people outside of the apartment complex loitering. This measure is also coded as yes or no. The signage measure indicates the number of signs posted in and around the apartment complex. Any sign observed by the apartment complex was counted, such as no-trespassing and parking regulations (see Eck et al. 2009).

Qualitative data. One of the common observations made by patrol officers was the juvenile involvement in criminal activity at the apartment complexes. According to the patrol officer on the third observational ride-along, a few juveniles between the ages of 14 and 17 in each of the five Section 8 apartment complexes are primarily responsible for the crime. All of the

juvenile offenders have allegedly been suspended from school, and this lack of education exacerbates the crime and environment even more.

In addition to the challenges faced when collecting the quantitative data of the observational ride-alongs, some qualitative observations, such as structural damage, were easier to observe while conducting the community surveys. For example, structural damage, such as the damaged common access doors of Apartment Complex B, was more readily noted during the surveys. Although the outdated construction of Apartment Complex C was observed during observational ride-alongs, the confusing construction of the complex could not be fully understood until one began to walk around. Also, significant safety concerns, such as the cable strewn throughout the grounds and wood stairwells in desperate need of repair, could not be adequately observed unless on foot. Fire extinguisher holders outside of units at Apartment Complex B were missing fire extinguishers. This may also be considered a concern for crime reduction because of the recent arson act that had burned down the leasing office at Apartment Complex B.

Community Surveys

There were a total of 51 community survey participants, with the majority, 70.6 percent, from Apartment Complex B and 29.4 percent from Apartment Complex C and Apartment Complex C.1. Males comprised 41.4 percent of the survey participants, and females comprised 58.8 percent of the participants. Although there were more female participants, most likely because the apartment complex population was composed of more stay-at-home females than males, the male participant percentage is only 17.4 percent less. Approximately 9.8 percent of the participants were Caucasian. The other ethnicities of the survey participants included 74.5 percent African American, 11.8 percent Latino, and 3.9 percent other or multiracial. For the length of residency at the apartment complex, 13.7 percent of the sample had resided for less than six months; 3.9 percent of the participants had been residents for seven months at the time of the survey. For the remaining 18 participants, 5.9 percent had resided for eight months, 19.6 percent had resided for ten months to one year, 7.8 percent had resided for two years, 11.8 percent had resided for three years, and 13.7 percent had resided for more than three years. The majority of the residents had resided in the complex for ten months to one year, which accurately portrays the transitory nature of apartment complex residents. Of the residents, 35.3 percent possessed a high school education level. Of the sample, 39.2 percent of the residents had some college education. In addition, 9.8 percent of the participants possessed an associate's degree, about 2 percent (1 participant) had a bachelor's degree, and 13.7 percent either did not answer or had not completed high school. The significance of the length of residency could not be determined because of the low sample size and the low number of participants in each group of residency length.

For the cross-tabulation average tables, no significant findings were discovered for the perception of policing effectiveness and community safety by race. This can be attributed to the small sample size. Interestingly, the age group with the lowest average perception of safety (3) was 18 to 25-year-olds, whereas the age group with the highest average perception of safety (2.5) was 49 and older. The demographic variable that possessed the greatest variance of averages was education level. Residents with less than a high school education were more supportive of the police, with an average of 2, and residents with a high school diploma (2.8) were least supportive. The highest average for the perception of community safety was 2.5 for residents with less than a high school degree.

Beat Officer Interviews

The IMPD comprises approximately 1,700 sworn officers. The north district employs about 300 sworn officers. The IMPD operates with three shifts: day, middle, and late. Typically, one patrol officer (otherwise known as beat officer) works each beat. With an already sparsely spread manpower, sometimes a beat or two are left open, such as when an officer needs to attend court or is on vacation. Three male officers who work Beats 73 (ND) and 74 (ND) and possess extensive knowledge and experience with the North West apartment complex hot spot participated in the interviews. Ethnically categorized, one of the beat officers was an African American and two were Caucasians. Two of the interviewees were married. The education level of the beat officers varied. One of the patrol officers fit into the 50-to-59 age group. One of the interviewees was in the 40-to-49 age group. The interviewee with the college degree was the youngest officer (20 to 29) who participated. All of the officers responded with variations of patrol (patrol officer, patrolman) for assigned duty and officer (patrol officer) for their current classification.

Overall, the beat officers' perceptions of hot-spot policing was less optimistic than previous study findings on the effectiveness of hot-spot policing. Even Officer 3, who was supportive of hot-spot policing, was quick to point out that the typical beat officer does not have time to be thorough and proactive. Two of the officers revealed that they believed targeted policing can have an effect on reducing crime at an apartment complex; however, one of the officers emphasized that criminals decrease their offending until the officers enter a maintenance phase (or predominately leave the hot spot unattended). Only one of the officers believed that hot-spot policing overall has a positive effect of reducing crime in Indianapolis. From the perspective of Officer 1, they are just “band-aiding” everything and not fixing anything.

The beat officer interviews are grounded in two main theories: Max Weber's theory of bureaucracy and the broken-windows theory. The different units identified by the patrol officers—such as narcotics, NRO (neighborhood resource organization), and CRT—is one of the characteristics of a modern bureaucracy. The north district obviously follows a clear chain of command with designated supervisors, such as lieutenants. Officer 3 identified that the 70s require a different form of policing. However, the rigid and inflexible nature of bureaucracies limits applying problem-oriented policing and creative hot-spot policing measures. One of the main issues often cited with bureaucracies is broken communication. None of the patrol officers interviewed believed intelligence information was adequately disseminated. Specific examples were given by the officers of broken communication between units, shifts, the upper and lower echelons, and individuals. To emphasize, “there's no communication between the lower people out here on the streets that knows what's going on in their beats and the higher echelon.” Lastly, the manpower issues and broken communication seemed to be hampering the potential effectiveness of hot-spot policing in the targeted area and the ability of the officers to perform to their best ability. According to Officer 2, patrol officers communicated what was needed in hot spots, “but with the shortage of manpower there's not much we can do about it and neither can they.” The recommendations made by Officer 1 for years clearly have not been communicated to the proper leadership. Officer 1 recommended assigning special units to hot spots for at least three to six months in unmarked undercover cars and civilian clothes working with the beat officer to gather intelligence. According to Officer 1, they can't effectively police with more than two hot spots at a time.

Crime rate data analysis is available from the researcher upon request. In addition, the community survey result tables, field notes, beat officer interview notes, interview transcriptions,

interview schedule, and community survey questions are available from the researcher upon request. Lastly, the observational ride-along guide sheet and spreadsheet are also available upon request.

DISCUSSION

Observational Ride-alongs

First, the close proximity of Apartment Complex A, Apartment Complex B, and Apartment Complex C, as well as the other apartment complexes in the hot spot should be noted. As hypothesized, a number of environmental, social, and management variables impact the crime rate of the North West apartment complex hot spot. As pointed out by an apartment complex resident and as seen in the physical observations at Apartment Complex A, the closer apartment complex units are to the leasing office, normally, the safer the apartment complex unit. In addition, as revealed by previous studies, including that by Eck and associates (2009), apartment complexes on corner lots—such as Apartment Complex C—often experience higher crime rates.

The concentration of economically disadvantaged individuals, Section 8 tenants, influences the crime rate. The Eck and associates (2009) study found “the rate of tenants paying with Section 8 vouchers is positively associated with apartment violence.” All of the patrol officers identified the concentration of juveniles as one of the issues associated with the crime at the apartment complex hot spot. The officer on the second ride-along revealed that juveniles commit a large number of the burglaries in the hot spot. One of the social variables often associated with crime is family structure. To further illustrate, from the perspective of one of the patrol officers on the ride-along, the high divorce rate contributes to the crime rate.

Community Surveys

As hypothesized, participants (25 answered 1 or 2) who fear crime or for their safety (safe alone at night scale question) are supportive of police (31 answered 1 or 2 for the support scale question). Overall, the policing effectiveness measure was consistently at or above 2.8; thus, the community survey respondents were at least moderately supportive and were satisfied with the policing tactics and crime-reduction measures in their neighborhood. Although these findings depict the condition of the apartment complex hot spot, this cannot be generalized to other hot spots or geographic places. The perception of policing effectiveness index was highest (closest to 1) with participants who possess less than a high school education (N = 4). The lowest perception of policing-effectiveness measure, 2.8 (closest to 5), included participants with a high school education (N = 17), participants who were 41 years old and older (N = 14), Caucasian participants (N = 5), and females (N = 29). For the perception-of-safety index measure, the highest measure (closest to 1) was from the Latino participants (N = 6), with a 2.4 average. The lowest perception-of-safety measure was 3.1, with respondents who had attended some college (N = 20).

A number of factors influenced the low response rate of the community surveys. Future similar studies may achieve a higher response rate by allowing more time to conduct the community surveys and by changing the methodology to mail-in surveys. The reluctance of the property management of Apartment Complex A for the administration of the community surveys greatly reduced the potential sample size. A few officers revealed that Apartment Complex A was

not cooperative with them either. The neighborhood itself, a hot spot, contributed to the low response rate. In addition, more Latinos would have been able to participate if there had been a Spanish version of the community survey.

Beat Officer Interviews

In regard to the first guiding question for the interview, the first interviewee, identified as Officer 1, did not believe in hot-spot policing. In fact, he referred to hot-spot policing as “smoke and mirrors.” The other two officers believed in hot-spot policing. According to Officer 3, anytime manpower and a limited amount of resources are added at a specific area, it will help decrease crime. From Officer 1’s perspective, community policing, not hot-spot policing or statistics, was the key to reducing crime. Officer 2 believed that hot-spot policing was effective for the targeted area but not for overall crime reduction. Officer 3 clearly believed that hot-spot policing is effective, but he also was aware of disadvantages. Some of the challenges faced with hot-spot policing identified by Officer 3 were the ability to sustain additional manpower, management involvement and awareness of crime issues, and the juvenile court system.

With regard to hot-spot policing effectiveness at apartment complexes and, more specifically, the apartment complex hot spot, Officer 1 believed hot-spot policing was not effective. Officer 1 recommended that teams dedicated to work at hot spots should be committed to the area for at least three to six months to gather intelligence and conduct surveillance. In contrast, from Officer 2’s perspective, hot-spot policing was effective for the apartment complex targeted but also caused crime displacement. According to Officer 3, hot-spot policing could be effective for apartment complexes and the North West apartment complex hot spot. Officer 3 also emphasized that for hot-spot policing to be effective, problem-oriented tactics such as building partnerships with the schools, police, and parents would be necessary.

Third, officers identified benefits and limitations of hot-spot policing during the interviews. One of the limitations of hot-spot policing at apartment complexes identified by Officer 1 was that offenders simply wait until the hot spot enters the maintenance phase (or officers leave the area) before becoming active. Though Officer 1 clearly was not an advocate for hot-spot policing, he understood the importance of community policing and communicating issues with problem areas. Even though hot-spot policing attempts to alleviate the issue of limited resources and manpower, Officer 2 pointed out that limited manpower cannot effectively reduce crime at a hot spot. To further illustrate, Officer 2 stated that to affect the crime of Indianapolis, the manpower needed to be increased overall to decrease crime overall instead of just in hot spots. One of the benefits of hot-spot policing identified by Officer 2 was the reduced fear of crime of citizens in the hot spot. One of the benefits of hot-spot policing identified by Officer 3 was that officers who are specifically assigned to work in a hot spot have the time to be proactive, unlike the typical beat officers. According to Officer 3, the main issues associated with hot-spot policing are crime displacement and not addressing the root causes of crime at specific places (i.e., social and environmental factors).

As identified by Officer 3, the 70s (ND beats) require a different type of policing. Not all of the officers wanted to work in the 70s (ND beats), and no open drug markets existed; however, low-income housing, including Section 8, may be more prone to rely on drugs as a source of income. Although the perspective of the existence and effectiveness of hot-spot policing varied between the three officers, one form of policing all of the officers believed effective was community policing.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the observational ride-alongs, crime rates, and beat officer interviews, perhaps Officer 3's insight about broken communities being more credible than the broken-windows theory may be valid. According to Officer 3, the broken-windows theory is actually more of a broken-community theory. Different facets of the community have to be examined to understand the crime rate. Officer 3 claimed that low-income individuals who move to a high-income environment cannot be expected to change, because the same social issues still remain present—single-parent homes, drugs, dense population, concentration of juveniles, and economically disadvantaged individuals. Apartment Complex A consistently appeared to be well maintained (except for the couple of abandoned vehicles toward the back of the complex); however, based on the crime rate data, the crime rate remained consistently high.

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