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INFORMAL SOCIAL CONTROL IN ACTION: NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT,
SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION, AND SELECTIVE EFFICACY

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INFORMAL SOCIAL CONTROL IN ACTION: NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT,
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation addresses the practice of informal social control in neighborhood settings by integrating extant theory with constructs from outside the mainstream of criminology. Empirical support comes from an ethnographic project conducted over a period of five years in an urban neighborhood setting. Detailed knowledge of this local context is used to frame informal social control as produced and enacted by residents in ways that both reflect and create the larger neighborhood social and cultural dynamics. Specifically, three ethnographic accounts are offered as separate papers to provide different lenses on the neighborhood dynamics. Each account can also be read as demonstrating the variability of ethnographic methodology. Taken together, these empirical papers not only report findings, but also illustrate various aspects of the unfolding process of constructivist grounded theory-building. For example, the first paper highlights how a serendipitous finding gave shape to further data analysis, illustrating the nature of “emergent” findings in grounded theory analysis. The second paper reports findings from more advanced stages of analysis and demonstrates the preliminary stages of theory construction. Finally, the last paper emphasizes the reflexive nature of ethnographic (re)presentation by presenting “findings” in the form of an evocative autoethnography. The dissertation contributes to the criminology scholarship by introducing theoretical constructs that have heretofore not been connected directly to practices of informal social control. Moreover, this dissertation is also a statement in

support of the integration of more “first-person ethnography” (Venkatesh 2013) into the core of criminology. Future work will continue to build on current scholarship to provide a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between individuals and communities.

DEDICATION

Dawn Marie Mohr, my beloved sister-cousin.

Words cannot capture how deeply I miss you.

Mikaia and Jahara, my daughters, my heart.

You are my greatest gifts, reminding me everyday how much life has to offer.

You humble me, you teach me, and you infuse my heart and soul with gratitude.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Crime is a persistent feature of neighborhoods, particularly those located in or near urban areas. A community without crime seems nothing short of a utopian vision in our society. Politicians, schools, church leaders and citizen groups are often featured in their attempts to “fight” crime. Even within academia the once “niche” specialty of criminology has emerged as a discipline in its own right devoted to understanding crime and criminal behavior. Within this discipline, a focus on neighborhoods and crime has both an historical and contemporary place in the research agenda of criminology (Bursik and Webb 1982; Horowitz 2001; Sampson 2012; Sampson and Groves 1989; Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley 2002; Stark 1987; Vold, Bernard and Snipes 2002; Warner and Rountree 1997). An important feature of this research is an emphasis on the role of informal social control within neighborhood settings. This dissertation situates the study of informal social control within the broader criminological literature and makes suggestions for theoretical elaborations (Strauss and Corbin 1994; Wilson and Chaddha 2009; Vaughn 1992) that can extend our understanding of this central concept by exploring the role of related social processes and cultural mechanisms.

Neighborhoods and Crime: Social Disorganization, Informal Social Control and Collective Efficacy

Criminologists interested in the relationship between neighborhoods and crime focus a great deal of their attention on neighborhood efforts to control crime. The starting point of social disorganization theory is the emphasis on the role of neighborhood structural characteristics in explaining crime and delinquency. In this way it is a classic example of a “kind of place” theory (Stark 1987). Shaw and McKay’s original research established the importance of understanding how community structural characteristics—poverty, segregation and residential instability—influence crime rates. In short they found that crime rates remained relatively stable in particular spatial areas regardless of the demographic characteristics of the residential population (Shaw and McKay 1969[1942]). Their work ushered in a wave of research that posited that it was something about the neighborhoods as places that had an impact on crime rates.

Social disorganization theory fell out of favor for a period of time in the late 1970s through the early 1980s as a result of disagreement regarding its central tenants. The bulk of the early research had focused almost exclusively on how the structural characteristics of the community negatively impacted the levels of community social organization (Kornhauser 1978; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003). Structural features such as residential instability, racial/ethnic heterogeneity and poverty became the markers of “disorder” or social “disorganization”. These were then linked to increased rates of crime and delinquency as the neighborhood was characterized as unable to regulate the behavior of its residents (Bursik 1988; Heitgerd and Bursik 1987). Other researchers

rejected the basic tenants of the theory arguing that disadvantaged neighborhoods actually exhibited a great deal of internal organization (Reiss 1986; Whyte 1993).

The theory has experienced a “renaissance” in the last two decades (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003:387; see also Reiss 1986; Bursik 1988; Bursik and Grasmick 1993; Sampson 1995). The catalyst for the resurgence of interest in this area was the seminal work of Ruth Kornhauser (1978). Her work engaged many scholars interested in social disorganization theory and led to an empirical focus on specifying the relationship between structure and culture in the original formulation. This renewed line of research has produced a body of empirical literature which is aimed at identifying the nature of the connection between structural characteristics of neighborhoods and crime rates. Coming out of this new work is a primary focus on *informal social control* as the key mediating variable between neighborhood structural characteristics and crime rates. This new emphasis has shifted the focus of recent research to explore a refined premise of social disorganization theory linking levels of community social disorganization to “the inability of a community structure to realize the common values of its residents and maintain effective social controls” (Sampson and Groves 1989:777; see also Bursik 1988; Carr 2003; Kornhauser 1978; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003; Sampson and Groves 1989). This new focus continues to inspire research designed to understand the exercise of social control at the neighborhood level, or *informal social control*.

Informal social control is exercised by ordinary citizens in an effort to maintain safety and order in their environment and can include such action as direct intervention, questioning strangers, efforts to collectively socialize youth, citizen watch patrols and informal surveillance (Carr 2003; Jacobs 1961). Such sources of social control (e.g. as

opposed to formal sources of social control such as the police) are posited as central to people's ability to reduce crime in their neighborhood (Sampson and Groves 1989; Teasdale and Silver 2009). The concept of *informal social control* became even more theoretically and empirically central with the introduction of the systemic model of social disorganization (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974; Bursik and Grasmick 1993). An important contribution of this model was the emphasis on relational processes (e.g., social networks, membership in organizations) as impacting a neighborhood's ability to regulate its residents by mediating the effects of the structural variables emphasized in the original social disorganization theory.

These developments led Sampson, Morenoff and Earls (1999) to introduce the term *collective efficacy* to highlight the *activation* of social capital as a key mechanism influencing the successful exercise of informal social control. Their goal was to go "beyond social capital" and advance a more theoretically dense argument for the social processes involved in the activation of social networks for informal social control in communities. Additionally, they argue that collective efficacy is based on the shared values of a community hence implying the importance of local cultural context for understanding the relationship between community and crime. Collective efficacy has been applied widely as a key mechanism impacting the exercise of informal social control in general (Browning, Feinberg, and Dietz 2004; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003; Sampson et al. 1999).

Extending Extant Knowledge: Contributing to the Literature by Capturing Context

Shaw and McKay's (1969/1942) original formulation of the social disorganization perspective recognized explicitly the role played by both structural *and* cultural disorganization. Kornhauser (1978) is most often cited in the recent social disorganization literature as reminding us of the dual interests (structure and culture) of Shaw and McKay. Several authors have pointed out that while the structural (or macro) elements of communities have continued to be addressed since Kornhauser's critique, the cultural influences remain largely unexplored (Bursik 1988; Haynie, Silver and Teasdale 2006; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003; Nielson, Lee and Martinez 2005; Warner 2003; Warner and Rountree 1997). These scholars suggest that understanding the relationship between structure and culture is most likely to occur through a "detailed knowledge of local conditions" (Nielson et al. 2005:864), a clearer understanding of "community culture" (Warner and Rountree 1997), or reference to the "code of the street" (Anderson 1999). Moreover, Robert Sampson used the occasion of his Presidential Address to the American Society of Criminology to encourage criminologists to "relentlessly focus on context" (2012: 6, 25). Arguably one of the leading scholars in the "neighborhood effects" literature, Sampson argues that in order to extend the insights of past research, scholars need to more explicitly *theorize* context. This dissertation is an attempt to do just that.

Focusing on what people say and do, this dissertation introduces new insights to further our understanding of the production, enactment and consequences of informal social control. It does so by integrating extant criminological theory with constructs from outside the mainstream of criminology to provide a more nuanced understanding of the

relationship between individuals and communities. Empirical support comes from an ethnographic project in a gentrifying neighborhood setting. I will provide a brief overview of the methods before introducing the reader to the major outline of the project and the summary of the substantive chapters.

Overview of Methods

This dissertation uses ethnographic methods to explore the multiple meanings of informal social control in a neighborhood setting. Ethnographic research employs methods and analytic techniques that are iterative, often messy, and not always linear (Charmaz and Mitchell 2001; Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2001; Fetterman 1998:2; Kleinman 2007; Smith and Kornblum 1996). This poses challenges for communicating how a researcher actually went about their project. Traditional formats for structuring a “methods section” can betray the reality of this process by privileging a linear or step-by-step narrative (O’Brien 2010). Metaphorically speaking, one might think about the difference between sharing a recipe for making bread (which relies on order and exactness) and trying to pass on a secret family recipe for cooking up some gumbo. Researchers interested in passing on their “secret family methods recipes” have advocated for a departure from traditional approaches in favor of more reflexive narratives (see for example Coffey 1999; Denzin 1997; Richardson 2007; Venkatesh, 2008). I offer glimpses at the *process* of my research in the reflexive notes throughout the dissertation, especially in the autoethnographic paper presented in Chapter IV. Here I provide a more standardized overview to orient the reader to the “bread-version” of the current project.

This dissertation was designed with the goal of contributing to the broader criminological literature on informal social control. More specifically, I sought to address gaps in the literature by addressing the social and cultural influences on neighborhood informal social control efforts. Ethnography, as a methodology, is particularly well-suited to produce a detailed description and analysis of how people in a particular neighborhood context make sense of their social world in order to meaningfully engage in interaction, in particular, informal social control (Prus 1996). This project is informed by key theoretical issues but also guided by the inductive process of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz 2000, 2006). The following research questions served as sensitizing concepts (Blumer 1954; Bowen 2006; Charmaz 2000) during the project:

- How is the “crime problem” described and defined in this neighborhood?
- What are the “common goals” of the neighborhood with respect to crime control and how are they produced, articulated, and achieved?
- In what ways does the gentrification of the neighborhood contribute to this definition, these “common goals” and to social control efforts in the neighborhood?

The intensive fieldwork for this research was conducted from June, 2008 to February, 2011. My research is also informed by general knowledge of the neighborhood gleaned before the start of the project and by additional data collected as needed to update empirical examples or provide answers to further analytical questions.

Establishing the Field Setting: Geographic and Symbolic Boundaries

A primary task of any ethnographer is to locate and access a field setting. The study of informal social control is theoretically grounded in the substantive criminological literature on “neighborhood effects” (Sampson 2012, 2013) making “a neighborhood” the obvious choice for a field setting. This seemingly straightforward choice presented the first major methodological decision in this project. Defining what constitutes “a neighborhood” proved as problematic as it was revealing.

The extant criminological literature implicitly treats *neighborhood* as a static entity with most researchers relying on readily available measurements such as census tracts, zip-codes or other geographical boundaries provided by official agencies (Coulton, Korbin, Chan and Su 2001; Sampson 2012; Sampson et al. 2002). Moreover, most of these studies use aggregate-level data to report on between-neighborhood differences rather than looking at variation within a particular neighborhood (Tach 2009: 273). So even while the concept *neighborhood* figures prominently in criminological research, its definition is driven by practical concerns of large-scale data collection (for an overview see Sampson et al. 2002; see also Coulton et al. 2001 as this is true in other social science disciplines).

I had lived in the neighborhood I call “Hilltop Circle¹” for over a decade but had never seriously considered how to delineate its geographical borders. I began to ask around and found that while there were generally overlapping ideas among residents there was still quite a bit of variation with regard to beliefs about the boundaries of the neighborhood. This was revealing in and of itself as portions of the neighborhood were in economic transition; part of the city’s urban “re-development” plan, and the most

contention seemed to exist as to whether these areas were “in” the neighborhood. The serendipity of this discovery was that I began to consider the theoretical importance of residents’ perceptions of neighborhood boundaries as they related to practices of informal social control. This had not been significantly introduced in the criminological literature (see Small 2002, 2004 for an exception). I continued to explore the tensions regarding neighborhood boundaries as the project evolved.

My final decision about defining the “Neighborhood” was to use a map produced and distributed by the largest neighborhood non-profit organization as a way of delineating the boundaries for data purposes. That is, I relied on the geographic boundaries of this map to determine if someone was a resident of the neighborhood or if a business or other location was located “in” the neighborhood. This provided me with a standard point of reference that was consistent and overlapped with neighborhood goals vis-à-vis the service area of the organization. These geographical boundaries for the neighborhood included at least part of five census tracts and parts of two zip codes. . Influenced by feedback from my dissertation proposal defense (May 2009), I concentrated my observations and analysis in the “transitional” zone of the neighborhood. Here I refer to the part of the neighborhood where gentrification has not yet “flipped” (to use a popular term referring to buying houses cheaply, fixing them up cheaply and selling them for a profit) the demographics of the neighborhood. The class and racial/ethnic make-up here is more diverse than in either the more class-homogenous parts of the wider neighborhood or the more racially-homogenous parts of the adjoining neighborhood. More detailed information about the neighborhood setting is provided within the substantive papers in this dissertation

Field Setting: Access, Rapport, and Membership Roles

Ethnographers must always address the issues of gaining access to a setting and attend to their role once they establish such access (Berg 2007; Creswell 1998; Fetterman 1998; Lofland and Lofland 1995; Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte 1999). Here again, textbook instructions betray the reality of this “step” which was more like an ongoing dance. The public setting of this project eliminated the need to secure permission from official gatekeepers or to otherwise be granted access to the setting in general. This does not mean I did not have to attend to issues of “access” at all. Access issues for this project had to do with being able to unobtrusively participate and observe in a variety of neighborhood settings. I found that when I could “blend in” with my surroundings, I was able to observe behavior most naturalistically (Lofland and Lofland 1995). I discovered early on that the main obstacle to accessing some parts of the field setting (e.g., the corner store and the street corner) was the social and cultural distance between me and the “regulars”. I used various methods, both contrived and authentic, to reduce this distance in order to “establish rapport” (Schensul et al. 1999:74; see also Fetterman 1998).

Access is only part of the equation in any field study as the researcher must also attend to her “membership role” or level of participation as a researcher (Adler and Adler 1987). On the one hand, I had the benefit of having lived in the study neighborhood for eight years before the research began. This enhanced my general knowledge of public spaces, business locations, neighborhood associations and local events. On the other hand, I had the challenge of tempering this knowledge with a desire to understand locally produced socio-cultural realities (Coffey 1999; Prus 1996; Schensul et al. 1999). This

tension helped reveal another way in which formulaic methods discussions obscure the complexity of the researcher's positionality vis-à-vis "insider" versus "outsider" membership roles (contrast Adler and Adler 1987 and Naples 1996 for a review of the problems with this dichotomy).

I was solidly an "insider" in some regards as a known "resident" of the neighborhood with a social network of peers who also resided in Hilltop Circle. However, I was not "a local" in the sense of having grown up around here and I didn't belong to any of the formal neighborhood organizations. As I began to expand my observations and become increasingly aware of the social cleavages in the neighborhood, I understood that my "insider"-ness was perhaps marginal and even tenuous at times. At various points in the research, I was cast towards the "outsider" end of the continuum as a renter, as a mother, as the wife of a black man, as a white person and as an educated person. It became increasingly clear that in this research, my membership roles were relationally dependent and shifted through both space and time (Mears 2013; Ferrell 2012). Paying attention to these variations, and reflecting on their meaning in interactional contexts, was an important part of the analysis of social relations in the field (See also Naples 1996; Root et al. 2013). Living in the neighborhood before, during and after actively collecting data gave me the chance to really experience the nuanced ways in which researchers can find themselves moving in and out of membership roles. This will be an area of further research and writing as I move forward with this project.

Data Collection and Analysis: Format, not Process

The actual process of data collection and analysis is an iterative one where they occur simultaneously in a kind of feedback loop (Charmaz 2006, 2007, 2008; Charmaz and Mitchell 2001; Coffey and Atkinson 1996; Strauss and Corbin 1994). This complicates the linear format of reporting the steps in a research process. I will begin by reviewing the forms of data² collected and then provide an overview of analytic techniques.

Various forms of data were collected and reviewed in this project including observations, interviews, newspaper articles, photographs, newsletters, e-mail messages, discussion forum posts and comments and various other miscellaneous documents produced by local organizations (e.g., fliers for events), crime logs, official police reports, official police crime data, census information and police reports. All data were publicly available at the time of collection. Field notes and jottings, transcripts and annotations of interviews, meetings and other public gatherings as well as various forms of memos represent the main source of data relied on for analysis. Taken together, these data constitute the empirical foundation for my analysis and interpretation.

My analysis is guided by grounded theory methodology as put forth in the work of Kathy Charmaz in her work on constructivist grounded theory (2006, 2007, 2008; Charmaz and Mitchell 2001). I provide more details about her approach in Chapter III. Here I review only the key practices and principles of doing grounded theory that guided the ongoing analysis in this project. First, in the early stages I strictly adhered to the principles of line-by-line coding. I worked with N-Vivo 8 (QSR International 2008), a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software to store, organize and code early

data. This software greatly assisted with organizing and retrieving data from a large set of field notes, newspaper articles, discussion board posts and early interviews.

The analysis portion of qualitative articles is often quite short with many authors referring to “emergent themes” or making reference to the coding categories offered by Glaser and Strauss (1967). This is in part because it is often difficult to articulate what actually happens during analysis. Consider the following account:

Some representations of analysis—notably vulgar accounts of grounded theorizing strategies—seem to imply that there is a standard set of steps that the ethnographer should go through in order to make sense of their data. It is vital to ignore any such implication...It is not enough to merely manage and manipulate data. Data are materials to think with (Atkinson and Hammersley 2007:158).

I draw heavily on the work of Charmaz (2000, 2006, 2008) and Hesse-Biber (2010) in using my data to push forth theoretical understanding. I employed a combination of more traditional forms of coding, and as my research progressed, I eventually eschewed my detailed coding in favor of extensive reliance on memos and writing as a means of analytic strategy (Charmaz and Mitchell 2001; Richardson and St. Pierre 2005).

This illustrates a second key analytic practice of the project where writing, review and analysis of memos allowed me to “think with” (Atkinson and Hammersley 2007:158) my data. These labor intensive practices force the researcher to reflect on her data and begin to write about what she sees (objective memos), feels (subjective memos), thinks (theoretical memos) and where she makes connections to the literature (substantive memos). The process of memo-making is the beginning of both analysis and writing the ethnography. Charmaz and Mitchell (2001:167) say

Memo-making is the crucial first step between coding and a first draft of a paper. Memos bring analytic focus to data collection and to the researcher’s ideas. Amorphous ideas and ambiguous questions gain clarity...Memos are preliminary, partial and correctable.

Memos constitute the core analytic “product” akin to the reams of output a quantitative researcher may produce while running models. Memos also are the “output” obtained from the core analytical task involving the “interpretive reading of data” (James 2013:564; also Charmaz 2008; Hesse-Biber 2010). It was from the corpus of memos that I was able to ascertain emerging themes and clarify important relationships between key concepts in the data. For example, from several memos on drug use in the neighborhood I was able to begin to think about the relationship between patterns of use and Bourdieu’s (1984, 1992) concepts of habitus and distinction. These connections then formed the foundation for thinking about social control as it is connected to the process of social differentiation.

Finally, and not mutually exclusively or necessarily in order, is the constructivist grounded theory practice of engaging with literature. This is at the heart of the constant comparative method (Strauss and Corbin 1994). Researchers are advised to maintain an open flow between data collection, analysis and ongoing reviews of the literature. This is to avoid “reliance on disciplinary stock categories” (Charmaz and Mitchell 2001:162) as the researcher looks for ways her data can inform and be informed by the literature. This is not the same as the deductive method of relying on the literature to supply the concepts before data collection; but instead provides a model of active engagement where gaps and discrepancies provide opportunities for novel interpretations. It forges a dialectical relationship between inductive and deductive reasoning about the data. I found that this process also forced me to stretch my disciplinary borders as I searched outside criminology to incorporate insights from sociology more broadly as well as from geography and anthropology.

Integrated Grounded Theory: The Larger Project

The overarching goal of this dissertation project was to unpack the frequently used constructs of informal social control and collective efficacy more specifically. The larger project seeks to develop a grounded theoretical understanding of the operation of informal social control that integrates insights from criminology with the theoretical framework of Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1992, 1996) and general interpretive and constructivist epistemologies (see Atkinson 1988; Charmaz 2000, 2006b; Denzin 1989, 1997; Garfinkel 1967; Goffman 1971; Heritage 1984; Schwandt 1994). In this larger work I will draw attention to the relationship between informal social control and social differentiation in general.

I propose that “neighborhood” can be understood as a *field* (Bourdieu 1992; Erickson 1996; Sallaz and Zavisca 2007) where ways of “doing neighborhood” compete for legitimacy. Neighborhood is understood as “a product of power relations, cultural and social dynamics, or everyday values and meanings” (Hayward 2012: 441). The neighborhood context of Hilltop Circle was one of ongoing social change where the process of gentrification has impacted both the physical and socio-cultural landscape. The emerging pattern was that “people who may not have intended to be neighbors” (Williams 1985:251) are found living in close proximity. The resulting social, economic and cultural cleavages produce tensions which animate a contested terrain, especially in the “transitional” parts of the neighborhood. The sociological project is to understand the nature of the relationship between neighborhoods and informal social control.

Drawing on Bourdieu’s theoretical framework, neighborhood is a field in which individuals differentially positioned in social space vie for power through the deployment

of various forms of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1977, 1984, 1992, 1996; Sallaz and Zavisca 2007; Webb, Shirato, and Danaher 2002). I argue that strategies of informal social control can be understood in part as a means by which competitions for these resources are enacted. This epistemological shift is intended to contribute to Carr's (2005:11) assertion that informal social control is "an active living process" by focusing on how residents "do" social control. Moreover, this framing allows us to ask questions about how informal social control is *produced, accomplished, and deployed* in and through every day practices of neighborhood residents. I argue that including an analysis of social and symbolic power highlights the way informal social control is linked to the process of social reproduction of inequality. I introduce the concept of *selective efficacy* to advance my position. This contributes to the fundamental sociological goal of understanding the link between the individual and society.

The articles in this dissertation provide three windows into this bigger project. I present these in the spirit of ethnographic case studies illustrating the process and product of inquiry and discovery (James 2013; Wilson and Chaddha 2009). I will briefly summarize each article below.

Overview of Dissertation: Format and Tour

The core of this dissertation is the presentation of three empirical articles. I present each as a stand-alone journal article with the exception that the references for each article are compiled at the end of the dissertation. I have ordered the chapters in such a way as to demonstrate the unfolding of the research process. My goal is to provide the reader with a "tour" of how I used theory both inductively and deductively to

frame my research and interpret my findings (see also Anderson 2002; Wilson and Chaddha 2009). Chapter II represents the early stages of the data analysis process where a serendipitous finding led to the “discovery” of previously taken-for-granted aspects of the neighborhood setting. Chapter III reports on findings that were more centrally influenced by the sensitizing concepts and illustrates a more deductively influenced use of theory in the process of analysis. Chapter IV engages the reader directly with the neighborhood and the key constructs through the use of autoethnography as both methodology and narrative strategy (Ferrell 2012). Combined with the background and information provided in the Introduction and Conclusion, the text as a whole (re)presents not only my data and findings (the product of research), but also my personal and scholarly journey (the process of research). I provide more complete summaries of each chapter below.

Chapter Summaries

The first paper, Chapter II in this dissertation, is titled “Walking Dogs, Marking Boundaries: Cultural Practices, Social Differentiation and Informal Social Control.” The analysis links the cultural practices of dog ownership to social differentiation in general and informal social control in particular. This chapter is an example of the value of allowing findings to “emerge” in the classic inductive style of research. Moreover, this chapter demonstrates the value of constructivist grounded theory in generating findings beyond the sensitizing concepts that frame a project. My research suggests dogs are woven into the social fabric of this setting as residents construct and maintain separate social worlds. In this sense, pet ownership is understood as a “cultural practice” that can

“play a crucial role in the process of inclusion and exclusion” in social settings (Tissot 2011: 265). I reveal how dogs are mobilized to mark difference, how normative dimensions of dog ownership reveal owner habitus and how dogs figure in social interaction. I conclude by considering how dogs featured prominently in the social control activities of a neighborhood organization.

In Chapter III, “Sex, Drugs, and Informal Social Control: Collective Efficacy, New Parochialism and Selective Efficacy in Action,” I focus more explicitly on crime control efforts in the neighborhood. I use data from neighborhood organization meetings and field observations to explore how particular behaviors become the target of informal social control efforts. I also highlight instances where criminal behaviors do not become defined as problematic. I use these cases to explore the relationships between the social construction of crime “problems” and the implicit “common goals” of the neighborhood residents. I frame informal social control as something neighborhood residents *do* in the course of legitimating particular lifestyle choices. I offer a new construct, *selective efficacy*, to account for the relationship between informal social control and social differentiation. Selective efficacy directs attention to the negotiated and even contested nature of the neighborhood’s socio-cultural landscape while asking researchers to theorize more specifically about the nature of the “common good.”

Finally, in Chapter V I offer a non-traditional presentation of findings entitled “Making a Scene: A Provocative Evocative Autoethnography.” This chapter uses autoethnographic analytic strategies to present a “layered account” (Ronai 1995) of my experiences doing this dissertation research. It is presented in the narrative style that Anderson (2006) refers to as “evocative autoethnography.” Self-reflexivity drives the

analysis while innovative writing techniques (re)present the data (Denzin 1989; Ferrell 2009; Richardson and St. Pierre 2005) in ways that “play” with the standard format of a journal article and simultaneously present the work in the form of a “play.” This move underscores the ontological possibilities of the performative aspects of autoethnography not otherwise captured in conventional forms of writing. At the same time, this paper is consistent with the overall ethnographic account of informal social control in a neighborhood setting. The result is a text that should both engage the reader and illustrate the ways evocative autoethnography can contribute to contemporary criminological research (see also Ferrell 2012; Jewkes 2012; Root, Ferrell, and Palacios 2013 for use of autoethnography in criminology).

A Final Note on Ethnographic Methods and Ethnographic Sensibility

I conclude this introduction by situating my work in the larger context of ethnography. I am working from the position that ethnography is not just a set of methods, or an end product, but is a “sensibility” (Ferrell 2009b) tuned to the keen observation and analysis of the social world. Here I am inspired by methodological writings on ethnography which put more emphasis on the *ontological and epistemological* foundations of ethnographic practices (Charmaz 2000, 2007; Coffey 1999; Denzin 1997, 2003; Ferrell 2012; Ferrell and Hamm 1998; Holstein and Gubrium 2008; Kane 2004; Kleinman 2007; Prus 1996; Richardson and St. Pierre 2005). Among other issues, these writings interrogate the role of the researcher in the production of knowledge (Coffey 1999; Ferrell 2009). I certainly made use of multiple methods in this project, but I would position my work as a whole in what Sudhir Venkatesh (2012) has

recently labeled “first-person ethnography.” More generally, the use of first-person voice and narrative style is consistent with the scholarly tradition of autoethnography (Coffey 1999; Ferrell 2012). I have tried to show the utility of this approach for representing data in various traditional (Chapter II and III) and non-traditional (Chapter IV) formats. Moreover, I hope to demonstrate the promise of this methodology for contributing to mainstream theoretical discourses.

Finally, I advise the reader that this dissertation offers only a glimpse at the entirety of the story that is the ethnographic presentation of the informal social control in this neighborhood setting. I amassed a veritable mountain of data that almost proved unwieldy. My decision to pursue the three article format necessitated the abbreviation of some of the findings. This was outweighed by the advantage of this format providing a structure that forced my writing process so as to complete the dissertation. I anticipate it will also offer significant advantages as I prepare these chapters for submission for publication. Preliminary details of the direction and scope of future papers are included in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

WALKING DOGS, MARKING BOUNDARIES: CULTURAL PRACTICES, SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION AND INFORMAL SOCIAL CONTROL

Abstract

This paper uses ethnographic data to explore the relationship between social differentiation and informal social control in a gentrifying neighborhood. I explore this relationship through detailed consideration of the role of dogs in the life of neighborhood residents. My research suggests dogs are woven into the social fabric of this setting as residents construct and maintain separate social worlds. In this sense, pet ownership is understood as a “cultural practice” that can “play a crucial role in the process of inclusion and exclusion” in social settings (Tissot 2011:265). I reveal how dogs are mobilized to mark difference, how normative dimensions of dog ownership reveal owner habitus and how dogs figure in social interaction. I conclude by considering how dogs featured prominently in the social control activities of a neighborhood organization.

Key words: informal social control, neighborhood, ethnography, social differentiation

Introduction

The daily life of an urban neighborhood is intricate and multi-dimensional (Jacobs 1961; Lofland 1995). Residents must work out how to coordinate their social actions as they navigate through and live together in the urban environment (Goffman 1971; Jacobs 1961; Lofland 1995; Prus 1996). Ethnographers interested in the social world of the urban neighborhood face the challenging task of producing a rendering of social and cultural life that attempts to both capture its complexity but also simplify the inherent ‘messiness’ by delineating some meaningful patterns (see Amster 2004; Anderson 1978, 1999; O’Brien 2009; Sullivan and Elifson 1996). One way of imposing order involves the identification of distinct social groups; a common analytical tool in research on gentrifying communities (see for example Anderson 1990, 1999; DeSena 2012; Freeman 2006; Lees 2008; Pattillo 1999, 2003; Williams 1985). This strategy allows researchers to treat the social groups as if they constituted social objects such that they can then be compared and contrasted with reference to “lifestyle distinctions” (Pattillo 2003:63), “parallel cultures” (DeSena 2012) or “patterns of everyday interaction” (Williams 1985:251). Generally researchers do not discuss within group variation but instead, they draw out the often “tectonic’ juxtapositions” (Lees 2008:2458) of social groups to reveal tensions in the realm of neighborhood life.

In this paper I use data from a neighborhood ethnography to understand how group differences relate to the practice of informal social control. I structure my discussion around a detailed observation of the cultural practices surrounding dog ownership in the research setting. I draw from the theoretical framework of Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1992) to connect these practices to the more general process of social

differentiation and social control. My findings contribute to the project of further specifying the social processes and cultural mechanisms which may influence the operation of informal social control.

I will first provide a brief overview of the literature on informal social control which invites scholars to contribute research highlighting the “social-interactional” dynamics and “cultural mechanisms” manifest in local settings (Sampson 2012:4). I will also outline the key constructs I will draw upon from Bourdieu’s theoretical framework. I then provide an overview of the background and setting for the larger ethnographic project. I present the methods in a way to frame for the reader how I structure the paper as an unfolding of the findings on informal social control. The substantive body of the paper reveals how dogs figure in the social fabric of the neighborhood. I discuss how they are mobilized to mark difference, how normative dimensions of dog ownership reveal owner habitus and how dogs figure in social interaction. I use this overall picture to provide insight into how dogs featured prominently in the social control activities of a neighborhood organization. I conclude with suggestions for furthering our theoretical understanding of informal social control.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This literature review highlights only the major developments in this area of research. I introduce key concepts with an eye toward extending our understanding of the nuances by which they operate in this local context.

Informal Social Control

Research on informal social control has been dominated by a concern with how neighborhood residents are able to work together to maintain safety and order in their environment (Bursik and Grasmick 1993; Carr 2005; Hunter 1974; Janowitz 1975; Sampson 2012, 2013; Sampson, Morenoff and Earls 1997). This line of scholarship is rooted in the early Chicago School urban sociology, particularly the theory of social disorganization (Shaw and McKay 1969[1942]). This early work highlighted the role of the neighborhood as a social unit and held that residents' ability to exercise social control was related to the ability to regulate behavior in accordance with "common values" (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003; Sampson and Groves 1989; St. Jean 2007). More specifically, social disorganization theory linked key structural characteristics of neighborhoods-- poverty, segregation and residential instability—to variations in crime rates. Perhaps the most significant and enduring contribution of this theory was to shift the direction of theorizing away from individuals to social structure and culture as the sources of crime (Bursik 1988; Bursik and Webb 1982; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003; Kornhauser 1978; Warner 2003).

Despite criticisms of some of its major tenets (Gans 1962; Mills 1943; Reiss 1986), insights from social disorganization theory have continued to inspire researchers interested in the relationship between neighborhoods and crime (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003:387; Sampson et al. 2002). The subsequent work in this tradition has sought to identify the nature of the intervening social processes and cultural mechanisms that facilitate (or impede) effective social control at the neighborhood level. Most notably in this regard have been the introduction of a "systemic model" of social control (Kasarda

and Janowitz 1974; Bursik and Grasmick 1993) and the development of the theory of collective efficacy (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997; Sampson et al. 1999). The systemic model highlighted the importance of relational processes (e.g., social networks, membership in organizations) as mediating the effects of the structural variables influencing residents' ability to exercise informal social control (Bursik and Grasmick 1993). This revised model of social control also emphasized the importance of formal public institutions as well as cultural and symbolic influences in neighborhoods.

The theory of collective efficacy is the most recent manifestation in this general line of inquiry highlighting the importance of informal social control. Sampson et al. (1997:918) define collective efficacy as "Social cohesion among neighbors combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good." The construct of collective efficacy posits mutual trust and social cohesion as the conditions under which social capital can be deployed in the service of "shared expectations for intervening" (Sampson and Raudenbush 2001:2; St. Jean 2007). The introduction of collective efficacy gave scholars a more dynamic concept which linked informal social control to "shared expectations and social interactions among city residents" (Sampson 2007:xi). Scholars, including Sampson himself (2007, 2012) have argued that there is great value in further specifying the theoretical foundations of collective efficacy and informal social control (Burchfield 2009; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003; Haynie, Silver, and Teasdale 2006; Morenoff, Sampson and Raudenbush 2001; Sampson et al. 1997; Silver and Miller 2004; St. Jean 2007). This paper is a contribution to that project, extending our understanding of *how* informal social control operates by integrating insights from the theoretical work of Pierre Bourdieu.

Power in the Field: Integrating Bourdieu

Pierre Bourdieu's social theory is often presented as a theory of social reproduction (Lareau and Horvat 1999; Sallaz and Zavisca 2007); yet, his original works sought to outline the dynamic interplay between structure and agency in the social actor's everyday practices, or social action (Bourdieu 1984, 1992; Lareau 2003; Webb et al. 2002). A comprehensive review of his social theory is beyond the scope of this paper³, but a brief introduction of three key constructs frame the applications below. First, the concept of *field* is a central organizing principle referring to "local social world in which actors are embedded and toward which they orient their actions" (Sallaz and Zavisca 2007:24). It is a meso-level concept invoking the analogy of games of sport where there are rules for play and strategies for getting ahead (Lareau 2003; Sallaz and Zavisca 2007; Webb et al. 2002). In this research, I understand *neighborhood* to be the *field* in which residents engage in contests to establish social legitimacy.

Two additional constructs from Bourdieu's theoretical framework, *capital* and *habitus*, allow me to suggest *how* residents draw on group differences to compete for legitimacy and to enact social control. Bourdieu famously expands the definition of capital to include four types: economic, social, cultural and symbolic (Bourdieu 1984, 1986). What constitutes capital, or "resources that provide different forms of power" (Sallaz and Zavisca 2007:23), varies by field and is the outcome of social struggle over valued resources (Bourdieu 1986; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).

Finally, *habitus*, as an embodied form of capital (Bourgois and Schonberg 2007; Caputo-Levine 2013; Desmond 2006), is "a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which...functions at every moment as a matrix of *perceptions, appreciations, and*

actions” (Bourdieu 1977:82-83, italics in original). Explaining the role of habitus in structuring social action, Bourdieu writes:

...habitus is not only a structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices, but also a structured structure: the principle of division into logical classes which organizes the perception of the social world is itself the product of internalization of the division of social classes (1984:170).

The concept of habitus integrates social structure and individual by emphasizing the reciprocal, yet largely unconscious, relationship between internalized dispositions and one’s place in the social structure (Simon 2011:24-25) as jointly impacting how “individuals engage in practices” (Webb et al. 2002:xii). I will suggest below how these constructs emerged as useful in contextualizing the role of dogs in social differentiation in general and informal social control in particular.

Background and Setting

Hilltop Circle⁴ is widely considered a “diverse neighborhood” by both residents of the larger city and the “locals”; however, the city’s website relies on 2000 U.S. Census data to report that the “diverse population [of the neighborhood] is representative of the City” (City 2008). More specifically, the neighborhood is 68% White (67% City) and 27% African-American (28% City). These same data indicate the neighborhood has a population of 12,561 residents living in 6,264 housing units making it the most densely populated neighborhood in the wider city. This is attributed to the presence of several high-rise apartment buildings within the neighborhood boundaries. Additionally, residents are more likely to have management or professional occupations and are highly educated overall with “percentages of college graduates and persons with graduate degrees [...] twice that of the City” (City 2008).

The neighborhood has a reputation that transcends the very local context of the 127 residential blocks and less than 2 square miles that constitute its geography (Byard 2001). References to “Hilltop Circle” have meaning as both a general geography (although the ‘exact’ boundaries are contested) as well as a more general social identity (e.g., a person who lives in “the Circle” is assumed to share characteristics with one of the general “types of people” presumed to live there). An article on the neighborhood in the City’s major newspaper put it this way: “...geography is an afterthought. Far more likely, the mention of *Hilltop Circle* will elicit adjectives. Intellectual. Pedestrian. Artistic. Political. Funky. Soulful. Residents here see themselves as a bohemian village...” (Byard and Schleis 2004:A1).

I maintain that this is a gentrifying neighborhood based on public narratives, observable signs, long-term observation of residential patterns and information gleaned from interview data⁵. The neighborhood has many of the classic signs of gentrification including emphasis on preserving historic housing, coffee shops and boutique stores, a farmer’s market, a concentration of “gay friendly” businesses, public markers of “artistic flair” and “pedestrian-friendly” urban design features (DeSena 2012; Freeman 2006; Tissot 2011; Zukin 2008; Zukin, Trujillo, Frase, Jackson, Recuber and Walker 2009). Additionally, the larger city includes the neighborhood in its featured “downtown redevelopment” projects, including a narrated trolley-ride snaking through the neighborhood on many weekends⁶. The ongoing gentrification of the neighborhood is an example of a structural characteristic that influences social-interactional and cultural processes in the setting. This is the case as persons occupying different class locations

find themselves sharing geographical territory. In this way, the space becomes (at least potentially) contested. I will return to this point later in the paper.

The fieldwork for this research was conducted from June, 2008 to February, 2011. My research is also informed by additional data which I have collected on an ongoing basis as needed to update empirical examples or provide answers to further analytical questions. I made extensive use of the three primary tools of ethnographers including participant observation, in-depth interviews and document analysis (Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont, Lofland and Lofland 2001; Buroway 1991; Ferrell and Hamm 1998; Fetterman 1989; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; LeCompte and Schensul 1999; Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte 1999; Wolcott 2004, 2008). Observations were conducted in public neighborhood settings and “scenes” (Glass 2012; Lofland 1998; Lofland and Lofland 1995; Pfadenhauer 2005; Van Mannen 1988), at neighborhood organization meetings and at other neighborhood-sponsored events such as festivals and community meetings. I engaged primarily in what would be classified as “participant observation” in that I was an active member of the setting at most times (Adler and Adler 1987; Atkinson et al. 2001; DeWalt and DeWalt 2011; Lofland and Lofland 1995). I lived in this neighborhood both before and after I was actively collecting data and my level of engagement was that of complete immersion at most times, although my status as “an insider” or “an outsider” fluctuated by space and through time (contrast Adler and Adler 1987 and Naples 1996a for a review of the problems with this dichotomy).

It is impossible to quantify the amount of time spent in the field as even during my “backstage moments” (e.g., at my personal home) I was still in and of “the field” (e.g. physically and psychically in the setting and a resident of the neighborhood). I took field

notes throughout my time utilizing jottings in journals as well as tape-recorded jottings to construct more detailed field notes of particular episodes. I also completed regular field interviews with both key informants as well as with residents with whom I came into casual contact. These field interviews were spontaneous but pointed engagements which yielded a great deal of data. They were mostly reconstructed from memory as soon as possible after having left the encounter but some were tape-recorded as I established relationships with key informants. In this paper, I make use of a variety of data, including an emphasis on the autoethnographic voice, to ground my work in the “epistemology of contradiction” which embraces the tensions involved in the “bold confrontation with the messiness of human social life..[including] our personal experience of this messiness” (O’Brien 2009:8). Moreover, I try to write as much as possible in “non-technical English” in order to situate this work as public ethnography (Gans 2010).

My analysis is guided by the work of Kathy Charmaz (2004, 2006, 2008) on constructivist grounded theory. Her approach modifies some of the rigidity of earlier formulations of grounded theory, but nonetheless provides a “set of strategies” that “provide systematic procedures for shaping and handling rich qualitative materials” (Charmaz 2004:496-497). These methods are uniquely suited as tools for the researcher in uncovering questions about processes. The use of grounded theory methods can take a range of approaches depending on the researcher’s particular epistemological goals (ibid: 499). More than a set of methods, constructivist grounded theory is better understood as a “way of doing things” in research that allows for an in-depth probing of the complexity

of the social world while maintaining a rigorous and systematic approach to data collection, data reduction and data analysis.

The theme of “dogs” emerged during initial line-by-line coding of my early field notes. I was initially perplexed but during a workshop with Kathy Charmaz (2008), I was encouraged to ask new questions of this finding. Employing the tenets of grounded theory, this early analysis shaped further data collection which was guided by theoretical sampling where I began to focus more on the role of dogs. This eventually allowed me to “discover” the nuanced ways in which dogs are embedded into the social fabric of neighborhood life in Hilltop Circle. Selective coding for dog-related emergent themes highlighted data which became the subject of extensive analytical memos. Further data collection focused predominantly on the activities and artifacts pertaining to the neighborhood organization.

I interpreted my findings to reveal that dogs featured prominently in micro-interactions where social intimacy or social distance was being negotiated. I turned to the larger literature to make sense of this finding and found that the study of pets and their relationships with their humans constitutes a growing field of sociological scholarship (cf. Greenbaum 2004; Jerolmack 2005; Robins, Sanders, and Cahill 1991; Sanders and Arluke 1993; Tissot 2011; Twining, Arluke and Patronkek 2000). I integrated these findings with my interpretations of the data through an application of the tools of “the analytical imagination” (James 2012:574). The order of presentation below is intended to invite the reader into “the processes through which [I] came to *understand* [my] data, rather than simply report [my] findings” (ibid, emphasis added).

Dogs in Neighborhood Life: The Construction and Maintenance of Two Social Worlds

In my study of Hilltop Circle, I identified two social worlds on the basis of behavior and expectations for behavior. I will highlight the between group variation in order to draw out the social processes and cultural mechanisms whereby difference is constructed in the social space of the neighborhood. In particular, I detail the “cultural practices” of dog ownership as I understood them to “play a crucial role in the process of inclusion and exclusion” from these social groups in public settings (Tissot 2011:265). The descriptions provided in this paper are of behavioral patterns and “codes” of conduct (Anderson 1999). I am not making the claim that these are the normative behaviors for *all* members of each social group. Moreover, the behaviors are not presented as indices of specific, fixed cultural orientations but I will argue that they may reflect cultural inclinations of group members. They are “real” to the degree that they mark differences between groups, they form the basis of stereotypes about group members and they often figure prominently in discussions about the neighborhood itself. In the end, I will also suggest they give meaning to particular practices of informal social control.

The presentation that follows is also a kind of map of the research process, specifically the unfolding of analytical categories that emerged during the application of constructivist grounded theoretical strategies. These strategies direct the researcher to rely extensively on the use of memos and to consult extant literature in a constant comparative method (Charmaz 2006b; Charmaz and Mitchell 2001). During this methodological practice, I integrated the theoretical insights of Pierre Bourdieu, to make sense of what emerged as the contested nature of neighborhood social space. Bourdieu’s

concepts allowed me to at once understand and then present my data in a way that reveals the operation of *power* in the neighborhood (as a *field*) (Bourdieu 1992; Lareau 2003).

Dogs as Distinction: Marking Difference

Bourdieu (1984) introduces the concept of *distinction* to describe how members of a social class mobilize specific cultural practices and habits to symbolically mark their difference. His work emphasizes the social production of *taste*, or aesthetic preference, as a vehicle for establishing and maintaining social distance. Tissot (2011) argues that “pets constitute social markers” (265) and that “dog ownership reinforces social distinctions” (269). A straightforward example of this in Hilltop Circle would be the “vastly difference resonances” (Tissot 2011:265) derived from a young black male walking a pit bull and an aging gay male walking a Welsh Corgi. The pit bull is associated with aggressiveness and dog fighting and has become “an outlaw or deviant breed” in American society (Twining et al. 2000:2; see also Anderson 1990; Tissot 2011). On the other hand, the Welsh Corgi draws a lot of attention due its short stature and is not generally intimidating to strangers. Its ability to mark distinction could arguably be enhanced by virtue of the fact that this breed was made popular by Queen Elizabeth II. I wouldn’t know this except for the owner informing me, perhaps by way of signaling his cultural capital, that he was “a queen with the Queen’s dog” (field notes, July 2008).

Hilltop Circle is home to a wide range of dog breeds, hybrids and “mutts” of all sizes and distinctions. There are “boutique” hybrids like the large Labradoodle and the Great Dane/Dalmatian mix which command a lot of attention when being walked through

public spaces. There are small unique breeds like the hairless Chinese Crested dogs owned by a local animal activist and a number of Chihuahuas owned by young white women in the neighborhood. There are also pit bulls and chows owned predominantly by local black residents. Despite the variety in the overall dog population, the class and race-based cleavages in ownership patterns forge the outlines of the two social worlds. This marking of social difference accomplished through displays of dog breed preferences (or “taste”) is important but is not the only means of utilizing dogs for “doing” social distance in Hilltop Circle. Dog ownership practices have also been tied to class-based norms more generally (Anderson 1990; Tissot 2011; Twining et al. 2000).

Owner Habitus: Normative Dimensions of Dog Ownership

Dog ownership comes with an expectation to care for the general well-being of one’s pet. How owners interpret this basic mandate varies widely from attention to basic survival needs (e.g., provision of food) to intensive pampering practices (e.g., conspicuous grooming and doggie day care). Tissot (2011:265) states that “relationships to [pets] are also based on contrasting socioeconomic norms” (see also Anderson 1990:222). Drawing on Bourdieu’s (1990) framework again, these norms are part of *habitus*, the internalized dispositions residents are conditioned to use for making sense of their everyday lives. The assorted ways in which owners vary in their relationships to their dogs can be understood as cultural practices “that reveal a distinctive lifestyle” (Tissot 2011:269). Anderson (1990) highlights this same point when he compares working-class blacks with whites:

In working-class black subculture, ‘dogs’ does not mean ‘dogs in the house,’ but usually connotes dogs tied up outside, guarding the backyard, biting trespassers

bent on trouble. Middle-class and white working-class people may keep dogs in their homes, allowing them the run of the house, but many black working-class people I interviewed failed to understand such behavior. When they see a white adult on his knees kissing a dog, the sight may turn their stomachs—one more piece of evidence attesting to the peculiarities of their white neighbors (222).

This passage illustrates that seemingly trivial everyday practices can usually be understood as implicated in creating and maintaining the contours of the social fabric of neighborhood life.

I found evidence of these same distinctions in Hilltop Circle. Consider the following from an interview with a neighbor. Darlise is a black woman in her late thirties with two teen-age sons. She is not married, but at the time of the interview her boyfriend was staying over most nights of the week. Cheech is a burly red-haired Chow that is kept tethered to the porch with a long chain. He has free roam of the covered front porch where he has a bed of old blankets as well as his food and water. She had told me that her landlord, a middle-class white man, doesn't like her dog tied up out in the front of her house:

Please girl?! You know how white people are. They feel bad for dogs, like I'm abusing him or something. He happy. You know that dog is lazy as shit. He good to lay around out there all day. I can't put him out back because of the ground's too soft. Here he stays and besides no one messes with me. I mean Bruce would take care of that now, but you know? Cheech being out there takes care of it like if someone would want to see if they could creep on the place. Even [her son's] friends, you know? People be wanting to see what you have and even come up on your porch and shit. Not with Cheech out there. Cheech gonna stay out there no matter what he [the landlord] say. He can keep his dogs in his house. Imma keep mines where it matters.

Darlise's disposition vis-à-vis her dog and his "proper" place and function clearly differed from that of her white middle-class landlord. Her cultural practices reveal an

emphasis on the dog as primarily and fundamentally “animal” as well as underscoring his role as protector, or even weapon.

Other examples of normative differences may include cultural practices pertaining to the walking, feeding, waste elimination, grooming and general socialization of dogs. Bourdieu’s theory would suggest that while habitus is largely unconscious, the mobilization of preferences results in the construction and maintenance of social difference. Let me now turn to a few more examples that illustrate this normative divide in Hilltop Circle.

Every dog owner is faced with managing the task of waste elimination for their pets. This task overlaps with the larger social order to the degree that an owner allows their dog to urinate or defecate in public space. Dogs routinely mark territory by urinating on objects in their environment. Additionally, dogs are expected to defecate outside in most cases. The question relevant to the larger normative order is if and how owners manage these tasks in ways that are sensitive to the shared nature of public place. My data suggest that the answers reflect the cultural differences in the role of dogs in life in general and that these differences can create a degree of tension in the larger social world by reinforcing social distance. In my field notes I write about Maggie, the white, middle-class nurse who lived in what she referred to as the “good section” of the neighborhood. She came to the neighborhood meeting to seek assistance with what she called an “ongoing problem”:

I have a man in my neighborhood who just insists on letting his dogs pee on my tulips. He walks his dogs two times a day up and down the street and they always stop and pee on my flowers. I can be standing right there and he’ll let them pee. I think this is vandalism.

The committee chair asked her if she had spoken to the man and she revealed she had not because she was a single-woman and didn't "feel comfortable" speaking with him. The chair also asked if her flowers were damaged and she replied that they were not. The issue here was the basic incivility of the act. The implication is that *well-mannered* neighbors would not allow their dogs to pee on a neighbor's flowers. More contentious is the issue of defecation.

Dog owners must determine not only where to allow their pets to eliminate waste but also what they will do (or not) with the waste. There is a booming pet industry in the United States that includes a number of products and services for managing the removal and disposal of dog waste (Greenebaum 2004). In Hilltop Circle there is a public expectation that owners will "pick up after" their dog. This is evident from interviews with dog owners, postings on message boards and discussions at neighborhood meetings. To this end, many owners can be seen carrying a plastic grocery bag or utilizing a leash-accessory that dispenses custom bags for this purpose. This practice, as embedded in habitus, can be read as a way of setting oneself apart as a responsible dog owner⁷. One neighborhood organization even raised the funds to provide a dog waste bag dispenser at the local playground announcing in their newsletter that "Cleaning up after your pet is important not just because it keeps the neighborhood clean, but leaving it behind can be a health hazard for other animals as well as a pollutant for our drinking water" (OrganizationBW, Fall 2010 Newsletter). These kinds of directives outline normative standards and implicitly characterize the kind of person who does not pick up after their pet as one who doesn't care about the neighborhood, its animals, or "our" health.

In contrast some dog owners believe that dog waste is an inevitable part of the urban landscape, whether in one's own yard or in public space. One neighbor mocked a white girl who had recently moved to the neighborhood as she was picking up after her Chihuahua: "I suppose she gonna get the squirrel poop too" (Field notes, September 2009). I interpret this as consistent with the general disposition towards dogs as "animals," and not "pseudo-people." This is not to suggest that there is no consideration for dog waste, but instead that the normative guidelines are different. In general, dogs are encouraged to deposit their waste on the sidewalk buffer or "city grass" or in any vacant lot or alley. There seems to be a shared norm that one should not allow their dog to defecate in another person's yard.

Consider though the following excerpt from my field notes after an encounter with Justin, a black male in his twenties who lived with his mom down the street:

This afternoon I saw Justin on my way to the corner store. He was walking with his "girl," Angel, and a puppy that was not on a leash. As he approached I asked, "Did you get a dog?" "Yeah" he said, stooping to pick it up. He stopped so I did also. "Is it a pit bull?" "Nah. He's a Cane Corso⁸." I asked him what his mom thought because I knew she was very afraid of my dog. "She cool. I mean he's just a puppy but I'm gonna train him up right and all." The dog was whimpering just then and Angel told him "Put that little nigger down or he gonna shit you." Justin replied, "Nah man, he gonna shit in that bitch's yard" and he took the dog and set it down right in the middle of Tracey's yard (Field Notes, October 2009).

Tracy is the adult daughter in a multi-generation working-class white family home. She works part time as a cashier in a discount store and spends much of her time on her family's front porch chain-smoking cigarettes with her teenage daughter. She is overtly hostile to most black people on the street, often mumbling "nigger" under her breath and is likewise known for calling the police when the black youth on the block are loud. It is

entirely possible that Justin mobilizes his dog in a particular manner as a form of resistance to this hostility and not because he doesn't know or respect the normative expectation to manage his dog's waste. As it turned out, he had to give the dog away because his mother's landlord threatened to evict her for a violation of her lease agreement prohibiting animals.

A final example of the differences in normative expectations regarding dogs is apparent at the local coffee shop. The coffee shop is in the heart of the concentrated retail area of Hilltop Circle and serves as a popular local meeting spot. It has both indoor and outdoor café-style seating as well as an extended patio in the property adjoining the shop. While neighborhood accounts (including interviews and newspaper articles) largely proclaim this a "diverse" space, it is overwhelmingly white and middle-class. While there are arguably several variables that contribute to the absence of working-class black residents⁹, here I consider just the role of dogs in perpetuating this exclusion. I do so for theoretical purposes, not to suggest that dogs are the most important or only way that the two social worlds of Hilltop Circle are maintained. I hope to demonstrate that this example may be particularly illustrative of the utility of habitus for capturing the relationship between seemingly individual norms and lifestyle, or class-based, social differentiation.

Middle-class dog owners are more likely to enjoy close relationships with their dogs as companion animals, even considering them part of their family (Anderson 1990; Greenebaum 2004; Tissot 2011; Twining et al. 2000). The coffee shop provides an arena for residents to "visibly display their class-based values" (Tissot 2011:274). As noted above, in Anderson's ethnography of a gentrifying area he found distinct differences in

sub-cultural constructions of the proper “place” for dogs vis-à-vis the home. I argue these distinctions extend to retail environments. Black working-class residents do not routinely bring their dogs to retail establishments in such a way as to afford the dog a role in that setting. On the other hand, dogs figure prominently in the scene outside the local coffee shop. This dog-friendly space allows residents to demonstrate their adherence to norms of proper dog socialization (Tissot 2011) as well as to conspicuously display their capital in the form of leisure time. Moreover, dogs are expected and welcome in this space as evidenced by an ever-present supply of dog bones and a community water dish made available to patrons. There was even a time dogs were allowed inside the establishment. The owners posted a public sign apologizing for discontinuing this practice noting that the health department had threatened to cite the establishment if they did not ban the practice.

The absence of black working-class residents in this “dog-friendly” retail space may be partly attributed to their disapproval of dogs in a retail setting, but I also considered a more direct exclusionary possibility. Anderson notes that “many working class blacks are easily intimidated by strange dogs, either off or on the leash” (1990:222). I have witnessed this many times in public and private spaces. Take one instance from my field notes:

[My daughter] and I walked up to [the local coffee shop] to take advantage of the surprisingly sunny Fall day. We left [our dog] at home because he is difficult to manage when other dogs are around as is often the case on these nice days. We ran into four people we knew and enjoyed our drinks outside mingling with them and three dogs we did not previously know. [My daughter] was sitting on the ground with a gentle, older husky belonging to a white man in his twenties that we recognized but did not know. I saw Adam and Cheyenne [his dog] coming up the sidewalk before she did and waved. Cheyenne is a Welsh Corgi who is ridiculously well-behaved. Never chases other creatures. Never jumps on people.

I got [my daughter's attention] and she jumped up and screamed "Cheyenne!" Adam let Cheyenne off his leash knowing he would come to us. Cheyenne immediately came running right for us. Instantaneously I heard a scream, like a full-on horror scream and it was only then that I noticed an older black woman in her sixties positioned between Adam and us. When I saw her, she was grasping the railing at the restaurant next door and to say she was startled was an understatement. Mercifully Cheyenne passed her in a second's time and Adam assured her he was friendly. She didn't say anything, just turned and carried on down the sidewalk away from us. It had been awhile since I'd seen someone react so strongly to a dog but in hindsight she may have thought the dog was running for her. In any case it reminds me and I reminded Adam that it's just not considerate to walk your dog without a leash in public places.

This example may be an extreme case because the dog was off the leash in a busy part of the neighborhood. Generally speaking, people in Hilltop Circle keep their animals on leashes in this area if only for no other reason than that the traffic is so heavy on the main road. Nonetheless, I think it illustrates what may go unnoticed on a daily basis in terms of black working-class residents avoiding the coffee shop out of a general fear of dogs, a disposition I argued early is structured by a habitus predisposed to view dogs as weapons mobilized for protection (see also Durr 2010).

I am not suggesting that the coffee shop owners or their patrons purposively mobilize their dogs to exclude black working-class residents. I am also not suggesting that only black working-class residents are afraid of dogs. Instead, I argue that differential attitudes about dogs and their role in social life, as embedded in *habitus*, can be an overlooked dimension of the social-interactional processes whereby difference is created and reproduced. This lies at the heart of what Bourdieu (1992) refers to as "misrecognition," or the process whereby individuals fail to recognize their role in producing the social world. These specific examples highlight the role of dogs in the construction and maintenance of two social worlds in the specific setting of Hilltop

Circle. Dogs also figure prominently in the more general and diffuse social interactional setting of the neighborhood. I will discuss this as it relates to the general practice of walking dogs.

Dogs in Social Interaction: Walking, Talking and Petting

Casual dog walking occurs primarily in the public spaces of a neighborhood.¹⁰ More specifically, sidewalks and sometimes the streets serve as the setting for dog walking. Other scholars have established that these settings are important locations for understanding various aspects of the socio-cultural life of urban areas including how strangers coordinate their social interactions (Jacobs 1961; Lofland 1973, 1998) and how transgressions may occur and be addressed (Anderson 1990, 1999; Duneier 1999; Duneier and Molotch 1999). Unique to these locations is that “*individuals in co-presence tend to be personally unknown or only categorically known to one another*” (Lofland 1998:9, italics in original). Careful observation of social interactions in these spaces reveals how residents actively negotiate the “intricate ballet” of city life (Jacobs 1961:50). I suggest that paying attention to instances of public interaction of the type described below, allows for a further unpacking of the relationship between the individual and the neighborhood context. Using the presence of dogs a focal point, I consider how these more general aspects of social life in Hilltop Circle contribute to the overall picture of social differentiation and informal social control.

It is common in all parts of the neighborhood to see residents walking their dogs. However, the ordinariness of the activity obscures the nuances with which dog walking structures the public interactional scene. Up to this point I’ve focused on the role of dogs

in creating distance but there is also scholarship documenting the role of dogs in facilitating social interaction (Duneier and Molotch 1999; Irvine, Kahl and Smith 2012; Robins et al. 1991; Rogers, Hart and Boltz 2001; Tissot 2011; Veevers 1985). Dogs provide a kind of “conversation piece” and can even “attract interactions” (Duneier and Molotch 1999:1283, 1279). The cultural trope that dogs are “chick magnets” highlights this potential for dogs to draw social actors together. Similarly, Irvine et al. (2012:27) suggest that dogs function as a kind of “prop” and that “strangers will initiate a conversation with a person accompanied by a dog where they would not do so with a person alone.” However, as with both tropes and social science research findings, this effect is not universally applicable across social groups. Previous research suggests that middle and upper-class individuals are more likely to initiate and respond to dogs in a manner that facilitates social interaction (Anderson 1999; Tissot 2011; see also Durr 2010).

Margaret, a white homeowner in her fifties, hinted at this difference during our interview which partially took place as she walked her dog:

Margaret: Dogs make people friendlier you know what I mean? It's like people will not think this and such about a dog and snub it. Well, at least not people who like dogs I guess. I mean the black kids in my neighborhood just don't like dogs. Seriously!? I mean when I was a kid, well we all loved the dogs in the neighborhood. Maybe it was because we didn't have one? But then again if I'm uptown I've got to tell parents that they really need to mind their kids to ask before touching a dog. That just worries me something about it out here [motioning to the larger neighborhood]. A dog wandering the streets may be trouble. Well you know?

Jodi: Yeah, [my daughter] loves dogs and she's not scared of them at all but then I've always told her to ask the owner's permission before touching a dog.

Margaret: well that makes more sense than teaching kids to be afraid of dogs, don't you think?

Jodi: I don't know. I didn't grow up where there were vicious dog breeds and that's something I worry about here.

Margaret: Oh yes! And they don't even use the signs [referring to a city ordinance requiring owners to post a sign warning that a pit bull is on the premises]. But what can you really do, huh?

Margaret's observations suggest a racial difference in attitudes towards dogs that given the context of the neighborhood (no substantial black middle-class presence¹¹) is just as likely to be a class-based difference. She notes that black children are afraid of dogs, suggests they lack proper socialization regarding how to interact with dogs and offers a potential racial code ("they") in referring to pit bull owners.

I have now unpacked a variety of ways that dog ownership as a cultural practice serves to construct and maintain differences among residents in Hilltop Circle. I suggest these differences are indeed perceptible to residents, that they emerge from the owner's habitus and that they are manifest in the process of negotiating social interaction in everyday life. I will turn to a final extended example now to consider how these cultural practices can inform our understanding of the operation of informal social control.

Patrolling People, Marking Boundaries: Informal Social Control and the Neighborhood Organization

For this final section of the paper I will focus exclusively on "The Bark Brigade¹²," an ongoing, collective dog-walking sponsored by the largest non-profit neighborhood organization in Hilltop Circle. According to their Facebook page, "[The Bark Brigade] is a monthly walk for dogs and their people that helps empower residents with the confidence to walk their streets and spread awareness about keeping crime out of their neighborhoods" (March 2013). I interviewed two organizers and three participants

of the event as well as reviewing documents detailing and promoting the event. Finally, I joined the walkers as an “observant participant” (Jones 2009) on three occasions before making a strategic decision to follow the event from more of a distance. This is a point I will return to below. I use this event to illustrate the connection between the local cultural practices of dog owners and the general practice of informal social control in this neighborhood setting.

Scholars interested in the relationship between neighborhoods and crime have identified *informal social control* as a key construct of interest (Bursik 1988; Carr 2003; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003; Sampson 1999; Sampson and Groves 1989). Informal social control is exercised by ordinary citizens in an effort to maintain safety and order in their environment and can include such action as direct intervention, questioning strangers, efforts to collectively socialize youth, citizen watch patrols and informal surveillance (Carr 2003; Jacobs 1961). Such sources of social control (e.g. as opposed to formal sources such as the police) are posited as central to people’s ability to reduce crime in their neighborhood (Sampson and Groves 1989; Silver and Miller 2004). The Bark Brigade is an example of informal social control in Hilltop Circle. My research suggests that it operates largely by capitalizing on two features identified in the larger body of literature: informal surveillance and facilitating social ties (see Kasarda and Janowitz 1974; Bursik and Grasmick 1993; Warner and Rountree 1997; Sampson and Groves 1989; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003). I will discuss each of these before turning to a discussion of how a critical review of the Bark Brigade can contribute to a different reading of the event. This alternative interpretation suggests ways we can extend theorizing on informal social control.

Bark Brigade: Informal Social Control through Surveillance and Social Ties

The neighborhood organization developed the Bark Brigade in 2007 as part of their larger anti-crime campaign (Organization1 Newsletter, February 2007). The organizer of the event chooses a meeting place and route which varies and is communicated to participants through internal emails, text messages and announcements at meetings. One organizer told me that he tries to identify “problem areas” of the neighborhood where “our presence is needed” (Interview, August 2008). Based on my observations, interviews and reports in the local neighborhood newspaper, The Bark Brigade generally attracts between 10 and 30 people who are accompanied by as many or more dogs. Additionally, the walkers are nearly always accompanied by one or more police officers from the city’s Community Oriented Policing department (Folkerth 2012). In a straightforward sense the presence of people on the streets, especially as read in conjunction with police presence, constitutes the kind of informal surveillance characteristic of informal social control. This was also illustrated in an interview with Jacob, a one-time office-holder in the neighborhood organization and a resident for over a decade:

[The Bark Brigade] is simple really: we’re here and we’re not afraid. We just had the idea that it would be good to have a show of our solidarity by walking our dogs together in the problem areas of the neighborhood where our presence is needed to show that we care about the area and that we’re not afraid to report crime. And we have and we do. We really do. I know personally the hookers see us coming anymore. I call right in front of them. [Jack] takes pictures. For real!?! He does. I do it even if I’m by myself but being with others helps to show we all report crimes. (Interview August 2008)

I never personally observed residents intervene (e.g., by making a phone call or taking pictures) when accompanying the Bark Brigade, but I did have the opportunity to

overhear one organizer orienting a new resident to “where the hookers hang out” (Field notes, September 2008). In each of these ways residents engage in informal social control through their informal surveillance of the neighborhood.

Perhaps more central to the neighborhood narrative about the Bark Brigade is its role in promoting social ties among residents. I reference the “neighborhood narrative” here to refer to the overall account as it is produced by the organization and distributed to the larger audience via newsletters and carefully orchestrated media coverage of the event. This public account draws heavily on the “community building” aspects of the event, underplaying the surveillance aspects. Consider the following excerpts from newspaper articles and newsletters:

“The goal is to foster a sense of community,” said [Randy], president-elect of the nonprofit [...Organization]. He said the sight of a group of people walking their dogs together is a show of support for residents of the neighborhood...[Another organization member] said, this is a wonderful way to meet neighbors” (Chancellor 2008).

“It’s an opportunity for networking and socializing... The events also help residents get to know one another, which is helpful when keeping an eye out for strangers”[quoting the neighborhood organization’s president] (Folkerth 2012)

“[The Bark Brigade] has helped to empower neighbors to come out into their streets and get to know one another” (Organization1 Newsletter, September, 2008)

[The Bark Brigade] has become a popular way to socialize with neighbors and network with area residents as they ooh and ahhh (sic) over our dogs (Organization1 Newsletter, November 2007).

These examples illustrate both the intention to facilitate social ties and the perception that this event accomplishes that goal. It is important to note here that research would suggest that this feature is not merely a “by-product” of the more direct surveillance capacity, but is instead a central mechanism facilitating multiple forms of informal social control¹³

(Burchfield 2009; Burchfield and Silver 2013; Bursik and Grasmick 1995; Kasarda and Janowitz 1974; Sampson and Groves 1989; Silver and Miller 2004; Warner and Rountree 1997).

Having established the event as an exemplar of informal social control in Hilltop Circle, we may conclude from the literature that it should help strengthen the neighborhood's collective capacity to maintain safety and order (see Anderson 1990; Bursik and Grasmick 1993; Carr 2003; Sampson and Groves 1989). I would like to turn now to an additional interpretation of the event which highlights the role of symbolic power (Bourdieu 1984) and returns to the consideration of social distancing.

(Re)Reading the Event: Social Contest and Social Control

Informal social control is fundamentally about a neighborhood's capacity to regulate the behavior of its residents (Bursik 1988; Heitgerd and Bursik 1987). In this case there is a hierarchy of domination and subordination operating at several symbolic levels. First, the name of the event draws on militaristic semantic references connoting power and control through surveillance. This helps establish the event as part of the larger anti-crime efforts in the neighborhood but also symbolically positions it as an extension of formal social control agencies. This is further accomplished by the presence of police officers on the walks. These levels of meaning may come across as demeaning or communicate a general hostility when the walkers wind their way through areas of the neighborhood where residents are already more likely to experience disproportionate scrutiny by the police. Moreover, these same residents are also likely to experience a general cynicism regarding the provision of basic services, including police protection

when needed (see Anderson 1990, 1999; Brunson and Miller 2006; Freeman 2006; Kirk and Matsuda 2011; Kirk and Papachristos 2011; Venkatesh 2008). The experience of being confronted by a large group of white residents walking with police may not feel as warm and fuzzy as intended by the neighborhood organization.

Second, the routes chosen by event organizers demarcate “problem” areas of the neighborhood thereby outlining spatial boundaries in Hilltop Circle (Tissot 2011). Anderson (1990:225) made similar observations about the individuals in his study concluding that “...it is also through daily activities like dog walking that borders are made and remade by people on both sides of the dividing line.” These borders are generally drawn along areas of transition in the gentrifying neighborhood. Consider the following quote from a Bark Brigade participant as reported in an article in the city’s major newspaper:

[This man], with his Pomeranian [Charlie], said that [Hilltop Circle] is a neighborhood still in transition. “But it is definitely going in the right direction. The [Bark Brigade] let’s people know we care” (Chancellor 2008)

Presumably the participant here is referring to caring about welfare of the larger neighborhood. This may or may not come across to residents who find themselves witness to what one of my informants referred to as the “po-po parade,” where “po-po” is a street name for police (Field notes, March 2009). Moreover, the Bark Brigade symbolically pits the walkers against the residents living along their chosen routes. This is evidenced rhetorically in the assertion that the event allows residents to “...lay claim back to the streets” (Folkerth 2012). Non-participating residents may experience the event as invasive, particularly as the dogs literally mark their territory along the route.

Finally, returning to a point made earlier in the paper, the cultural practices surrounding dog ownership operate in general to create and maintain social distance in Hilltop Circle. This is particularly true with regard to differences between gentrifying whites and working-class blacks. Two aspects of these differences may further contribute to the Bark Brigade operating as a kind of wedge, further establishing the contrasts between social groups in Hilltop Circle. First, Bark Brigade organizers had t-shirts made for themselves and their canine companions. This kind of accessorizing is not only a form of conspicuous consumption (Veblen 2000[1899]), but also establish the walkers as fundamentally different in their attitudes toward dogs in general. The shirts also become a kind of cultural capital that materially express in-group solidarity which may serve to legitimate their very existence¹⁴. Second, the reader will recall that the general finding that dogs facilitate social interaction does not hold among working class black residents who may be generally fearful of dogs. So while the newspaper has reported that “families scurried into front yards to see the dogs parade by” (Chancellor 2008), based on my observations, it is possible that these same families were actually maneuvering to get some distance from the dogs. While I was not present during the walk with the reporter, I can attest to the general avoidance of dogs by black residents of the neighborhood. It can be a matter of practical importance to socialize young children in urban areas to fear dogs, particularly as vicious dog breeds may be more common here and dogs may even be used as weapons (Anderson 1990; Twining et al. 2000). Parading dogs through the neighborhood in an attempt to facilitate social contact may even be experienced as threatening or terrorizing. Taken together these two points suggest that the intent of the organization to build community may backfire among those who are not

part of this social group of gentrifiers who have come to this neighborhood in search of historic homes and a gritty urban experience (Lees 2008; Tissot 2011; Zukin 2008). The Bark Brigade is read in this instance as a form of symbolic domination and further demarcates differences among the social groups in Hilltop Circle.

I found myself having to contend with these realities on a practical level as my street contacts broadened during the course of my larger project. I was already purposely walking my dog through areas of the neighborhood with a reputation for being “problematic” when I serendipitously found him to be an asset for making contacts with persons to which I otherwise had no “bridge” (Robins et al. 1991; see also Duneier and Molotch 1999). On account of mobilizing my dog in this way I had the occasion to capitalize on him as resource for engaging in interaction with strangers. I had reason to believe that if I was seen participating in the Bark Brigade it could put these fledgling relationships at risk. I made this assessment predominantly on the basis of being aware of the distrust of the police in these areas. I felt that being seen walking in a group with officers at the helm would mark me as the “kind of person” who cooperates with police in general, a violation of the general urban “code of the street” (Anderson 1999). I made a decision to discontinue my direct participation in the Bark Brigade and to observe the more general operations of the committee in its public, albeit behind closed doors, meetings. This allowed me to continue to observe the discussions, recommendations and decision-making of the organization without potentially jeopardizing the relationships I had made in the field.

Conclusion

Dogs constitute an important part of the social fabric of Hilltop Circle. This finding holds whether or not any particular individual owns and/or likes dogs. My research suggests that dogs play a role in the general construction and maintenance of boundaries between social groups. A review of dog ownership as cultural practice highlights how difference operates to “exclude others and define insiders” (Tissot 2011:265-66). These examples illustrate how everyday practices work to construct and maintain the general differences between the social worlds. Importantly, these differences also figure into the overall picture of informal social control in this neighborhood setting.

In this way this research contributes to the larger project of theorizing about the social processes and cultural mechanisms that influence the operation of informal social control as called for in the criminology literature (Bursik 1988; Kornhauser 1978; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003; Nielson, Lee and Martinez 2005; Warner 2003; Warner and Rountree 1997). In particular, this research establishes the importance of paying attention to the micro- and meso-level neighborhood features. I highlight the importance of micro-level interactional settings and meso-level cultural practices as influential in understanding how informal social control is articulated and accomplished. This marks an epistemological shift which furthers the extant literature through drawing on critical and interpretive sensibilities in the unpacking of informal social control. This shift suggests the utility of understanding how power differences intersect with cultural practices as residents accomplish informal social control. For example, one way residents in this specific neighborhood “do” informal social control is through the marking of social and

spatial boundaries (see also Anderson 1990; Tissot 2011). Dogs and their owners jointly participate in the social-interactional accomplishment of these boundaries. While this is an idiographic portrait of informal social control, it underscores the value of ethnographic data for rigorously contextualizing criminological constructs.

CHAPTER III

SEX, DRUGS, AND INFORMAL SOCIAL CONTROL: COLLECTIVE EFFICACY, NEW PAROCHIALISM AND SELECTIVE EFFICACY IN ACTION

Abstract

The expansive literature on neighborhood effects consistently identifies the central importance of informal social control, yet many scholars have continued to stress the value of further specifying various aspects of the theoretical foundations of this concept (Burchfield 2009; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003; Haynie, Silver, and Teasdale 2006; Morenoff, Sampson and Raudenbush 2001; Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls 1997; Silver and Miller 2004; St. Jean 2007). In one promising turn, Carr (2005:11) identifies “informal social control as an active living process.” This paper elaborates that direction by suggesting it is useful to regard informal social control as something *produced* by neighborhood residents. I illustrate this approach by providing details of the dynamics of informal social control in one neighborhood setting. This evidence is presented in two parts. The first is the presentation and analysis of active informal social control campaigns in the neighborhood. The second half of the paper presents a negative case analysis as a way to further theorize about socio-cultural processes giving rise to informal social control. Taken together, this evidence is used to frame informal social control as something neighborhood residents *do* in the course of legitimating particular life-style

choices (Bourdieu 1984; Pattillo 2003; Weber 1946). I offer a new construct, *selective efficacy*, to account for the relationship between informal social control and social differentiation in general. Selective efficacy highlights the process of coordinating social action to prohibit, prevent or deter residents from engaging in some behaviors while simultaneously ignoring, facilitating and/or encouraging other behaviors. It directs attention to the negotiated and even contested nature of the neighborhood's socio-cultural landscape while asking researchers to theorize more specifically about the nature of the "common good."

Key words: informal social control, neighborhood effects, collective efficacy, new parochialism

Introduction

I had been renting one half of a duplex located on an alley in the heart of the "transitional" part of a gentrifying neighborhood when I came home one day to find a sign in front of the house reading "We Report All Crimes on Our Block!" It was mounted on a metal frame that was anchored into the ground just to the left of the center column dividing the front porch. My initial reaction was to remove it, but my deference to norms of neighborliness stopped me. It was clear the new neighbors had put it on "their side" of our shared front garden-area. But would others read it that way?

On its face, the sign was a proclamation of the owner's anti-crime position and intention to report crime to authorities. This was problematic enough for me as I'd spent the last year developing what were still precarious relationships with the predominantly Black residents who routinely used the alley for mundane, yet sometimes criminal,

purposes. This included a core group of neighborhood youth on foot and bicycles as well as a shifting group of local prostitutes who often used an abandoned garage on the adjoining dirt alley for business. I had carefully established myself as someone who was “alright”¹⁵. This status is conferred upon white residents in the neighborhood who are not overtly racist and who know how to “mind their own business”.

This sign threatened to undermine the work I’d done to establish myself as the “kind of person” who *wouldn’t* report all crimes on the block. I had established that I adhered to the local code of “mind your own business” by not calling the police to report suspected prostitution or drug activity in the alley. I wasn’t confident that passerby’s would read the sign as belonging to only one-half of the house. What made me perhaps most upset about the sign was that I immediately perceived it a hostile and racist gesture. It seemed clear to me that it was directed at the Black folks who traversed the alley. My best evidence of this was that I knew Darin¹⁶, the new neighbor, was smoking marijuana on the porch in the evenings. I could clearly smell it from my bedroom window just above the porch. Moreover, Darin had shared with me that he knew how to “beat the cable” and that if I wanted to get cable television that he would rig it so I had all the premium channels as long as I was willing to let him hook his house up through mine. I guess he didn’t plan on reporting *all* the crimes on the block after all. It left me thinking that I had unanswered questions about the informal social control literature, particularly regarding what socio-cultural factors might shape neighborhood interventions.

Theoretical Background/Literature Review

Informal social control is at its most basic about collective regulation of neighborhood order (Carr 2005; Janowitz 1975; Sampson et al. 1997). It is exercised by ordinary citizens in an effort to maintain safety and order in their environment and can include such actions as direct intervention, questioning strangers, efforts to collectively socialize youth, citizen watch patrols and informal surveillance (Carr 2003; Jacobs 1961). Throughout the extant literature, informal social control is variously framed as achieving, promoting or maintaining “collective goals” (Sampson et al. 1997:918), “desired principles” (Sampson et al. 1997), “the common good” (Carr 2005:9; Sampson et al. 1997:918) and “public good” (St. Jean 2007:3). The referent for these terms has generally been regarded as the “desire of community residents to live in safe and orderly environments that are free of predatory crime, especially interpersonal violence” (Sampson et al. 1997:918, see also Carr 2005; Pattillo 1998; St. Jean 2007). Most of the empirical scholarship on informal social control emerges from criminology where theoretical insights have “been inferred from large-scale surveys” (Carr 2003:1254). I will give a brief overview of this expansive literature below.

Social Disorganization and Informal Social Control

Criminologists have long been interested in the relationship between neighborhoods and crime. Early insights from social disorganization theory (Shaw and McKay 1969[1942]) drive this line of inquiry. Shaw and McKay’s original research established the importance of understanding how community structural characteristics—poverty, segregation and residential instability—influence crime rates. In short, they

found that that crime rates remained relatively stable in particular spatial areas regardless of the demographic characteristics of the residential population (Shaw and McKay 1969[1942]). In this way it is a classic example of a “kind of place” theory (Stark 1987) and figured prominently in the development of a body of scholarship that would come to be known as “neighborhood effects” (Browning and Jackson 2013; Sampson 2012, 2013; Sampson et al. 2002; Wilson 1987, 1991). The study of informal social control also makes its theoretical home in this “neighborhood effects” literature.

Social Disorganization theory has experienced a “renaissance” in the last two decades (Browning and Jackson 2013; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003:387; see also Reiss 1986; Bursik 1988; Bursik and Grasmick 1993; Sampson 1995). This new research is guided by a refined version of the theory linking levels of community social disorganization to “the inability of a community structure to realize the common values of its residents and maintain effective social controls” (Sampson and Groves 1989:777; see also Bursik 1988; Carr 2003; Kornhauser 1978; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003; Sampson and Groves 1989). Coming out of this new work is a primary focus on *informal social control* as the key mediating variable between neighborhood structural characteristics and crime rates. Much of this scholarship has sought to clarify the nature of the operation of informal social control.

Arguably the pivotal development in this regard was the introduction of the systemic model of control (see Bursik 1988; Bursik and Grasmick 1993; Kasarda and Janowitz 1974). This model emphasized the centrality of relational processes (e.g., social networks, membership in organizations) in impacting a neighborhood’s ability to regulate its residents by mediating the effects of the structural variables emphasized in the original

social disorganization theory. Much of the cumulative body of research inspired by this approach has worked to disentangle the influence of social ties and social capital on informal social control at both the individual and community-level (see for example Bellair 1997; Bursik 1988; Haynie et al. 2006; Morenoff et al. 2001; Rountree and Warner 1999; Sampson and Groves 1989; Sampson et al. 1997; Silver and Miller 2004; Teasdale and Silver 2009). This paper draws on two key constructs emerging from this contemporary research on informal social control: *collective efficacy* (Sampson et al. 1997; Morenoff et al. 2001) and *new parochialism* (Carr 2003, 2005).

Collective Efficacy and New Parochialism

Collective efficacy improves on the more general construct of informal social control by relying on more sophisticated empirical techniques and advancing a more nuanced theoretical explanation for how residents manage safety and order. Collective efficacy is defined as “social cohesion among neighbors combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good” (Sampson et al. 1997:918). The construct emphasizes the necessity of *activating* social capital as key to the successful exercise of informal social control. Additionally, Sampson and his colleagues (1999) argue that collective efficacy is based on the *shared values* of a community hence reinforcing the concept of common (or public) goals embedded in previous definitions of informal social control. The measure of collective efficacy used extensively in the extant literature is a 10-item Likert scale designed to measure mutual trust and solidarity as well as informal social control. The five items measuring informal social control take the root form of: “Would you say it is very likely, likely, neither likely nor unlikely, unlikely, or very

unlikely” that “their neighbors could be counted on to intervene” in one of five ways to be discussed in more detail below (Sampson et al. 1997:919). In essence this is a measure of residents’ attitudes about or expectations that their neighbors would be willing to intervene.

The other construct, new parochialism, is based on ethnographic observations of actual instances of informal control in a white working-class Chicago neighborhood (Carr 2003, 2005). Carr’s research is unique in that it is the only published ethnography with informal social control as its central focus. His work engages with the systemic model’s emphasis on the contribution of Albert Hunter (1985). Hunter’s (1985) model identifies three levels of social control: the private (family), the parochial (neighbors and extended social networks) and the public (formal institutions). Until Carr’s research (2003, 2005), little was made of the interplay of these levels. Carr introduces a “new, hybrid form of community social control” (2005:7) which he terms *new parochialism*:

...in which diminished private and traditionally parochial forms of social control are replaced by a set of behaviors that combines parochial and public controls. For instance, instead of providing supervision and direct physical intervention in disputes, which are private and traditionally parochial forms of control, Beltway residents engage in behaviors that are more secure and facilitated by actors from the public sphere of controls...Residents who engage in these actions want to control crime and disorder, but they also fear repercussions from their personal involvement...The new parochialism, then, is that set of practices that creates solutions at the parochial level but that owes its existence and its efficacy to the intervention of institutions and groups from outside the neighborhood (ibid: 12-13).

Resident involvement in community organizations, particularly those which partner with law enforcement officials, is a primary example of this strategy of informal social control. I will consider this strategy below as it was used in the neighborhood of study.

New Directions: Asking Questions about Actions

Although the expansive literature on neighborhood effects consistently identifies the central importance of informal social control, many scholars have continued to stress the value of further specifying various aspects of the theoretical foundations of this concept (Burchfield 2009; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003; Haynie et al. 2006; Morenoff et al. 2001; Sampson et al. 1997; Silver and Miller 2004; St. Jean 2007). Robert Sampson, a leading force in this line of inquiry, praises Peter St. Jean's critical "interroga[tion]" of collective efficacy theory as contributing to a "new wave of urban research that is seeking to make sense of the proximate social mechanisms, interactions, and ecological structures that help explain crime" (2007:xi, xiii). The research described in this paper seeks to do the same.

I contribute to the literature by asking different questions of the key components of informal social control as identified in previous research. First, I ask what kinds of behaviors are identified as "neighborhood problems" in the first place? The literature on collective efficacy asks only about the likelihood that a neighbor would intervene if one of the following happened:

- (i) children were skipping school and hanging on a street corner, (ii) children were spray-painting graffiti on a local building, (iii) children were showing disrespect to an adult, (iv) a fight broke out in front of their house, and (v) the fire station closest to their home was threatened with budget cuts (Sampson et al. 1997:920).

Certainly there is a long list of other types of behaviors that demand attention in any particular neighborhood setting¹⁷. The implicit parameters derived from the ubiquitous reference to the common/public good would suggest that *any* behavior defined as threatening community values could inspire intervention. In this paper I identify the neighborhood organization as a "claims-maker" engaged in the process of defining what

constitutes neighborhood problems (Kitsuse and Spector 1973:415; Schneider 1985; Spector and Kitsuse 1973:146).

The second question I ask is *how* do residents intervene? Previous research, relying on large quantitative data sets and sophisticated statistical techniques, is limited in so far as it cannot capture the variety of means by which residents (or their neighbors) could act. The standard measure of collective efficacy referred to above (see Sampson et al. 1997) does not ask *how*, or what strategy of intervention people would use.

Furthermore, this research does not measure actual incidents of intervention on the part of the respondent. There are a limited number of qualitative or ethnographic studies which report actual instances of intervention (see Anderson 1990, 1999; Duneier 1999; Pattillo-McCoy 1998, 1999; Small 2002, 2004; Venkatesh 2008) and Carr's (2003, 2005) research is the only published ethnographic account with informal social control as its focus. This research is designed to develop an understanding of what informal social control actually looks like in a natural setting. This epistemological shift can provide depth to the theoretical and empirical findings reviewed above.

The final question I ask of the data is: What can specific instances of collective intervention tell us about the common good? This question seeks to unpack the meaning of informal social control to and for residents of the local neighborhood. I argue that collective efforts to regulate behavior are themselves efforts to produce, achieve and articulate common goals. This focus suggests the negotiated, and potentially contested, nature of collective social control efforts. Theoretically, it shifts attention to issues of power (and domination) in the production and exercise of informal social control (see

also Lyons 1999). These questions hold the potential to elaborate our theoretical understanding of informal social control.

Research Methods and Neighborhood Setting

The research reported here is part of a larger ethnographic study of informal social control in a gentrifying neighborhood. I conducted intensive fieldwork for this project from June, 2008 to February, 2011. I continued to collect data in the form of artifacts, interviews and updates throughout the writing up of the findings in 2013. The bulk of the data reported in this paper come from observations of public meetings and other gatherings of the largest neighborhood non-profit organization¹⁸. I will also draw on insights from the greater corpus of data collected through participant observations, in-depth interviews and document analysis as they pertain to the neighborhood as a whole. I will first describe the neighborhood setting and then turn to a more detailed discussion of my participant observation at the neighborhood organization meetings.

Neighborhood Setting

Hilltop Circle is located near the downtown area of a Midwestern city of approximately 200,000. The larger city has many characteristics of other Rust Belt cities, which experienced economic downturns in the 1970s with the loss of manufacturing jobs. Hilltop Circle boasts a history of housing some of the areas great industrial leaders from more prosperous times (Phillips 2003). Hilltop Circle was not immune to larger economic decline in the city and many parts of the neighborhood fell into decay as residents left for the surrounding suburbs. The neighborhood has been in the “re-development” phase for the last decade as pockets of run-down housing are renovated

and inhabited by homeowners or re-sold by investors (Boulton and Hobbs 2011). The “resurgence” of interest in this urban neighborhood has been accompanied by increased investments in local business, city investment in aesthetic improvements and increased participation in neighborhood organizations (Boulton and Hobbs 2011; Phillips 2003; Neighborhood Organization website). Moreover, the neighborhood is home to the city’s first designated Historic District (Neighborhood Organization Website).

According to the City’s¹⁹ compilation of 2000 U.S. Census data, the neighborhood is 68% White and 27% African-American, nearly identical to the city-wide racial distribution.²⁰ The neighborhood is demographically distinct in several ways: greater educational attainment of residents 25 and over with nearly twice the number of persons holding college and graduate degrees, a lower than average percentage of households with children (25%), a higher than City average of “Other, Nonfamily” household types, and a far greater concentration of residents 85 years of age and older (5%).

Hilltop Circle is known throughout the city as home to artists, musicians and other creative types. The City’s website describes Hilltop Circle as an “urban village” and an “eclectic, pedestrian friendly neighborhood.” Additionally, the neighborhood has been identified as having one of the highest concentrations of gay men and lesbians in the state (Byard 2001). The neighborhood is home to an elementary school, a public library, a fire station, upwards of five churches and a synagogue and a variety of mostly local, but also national, retail establishments. The City’s public transportation serves the neighborhood with bus routes along three central roads accessing the area. Finally, the neighborhood is home to several types of voluntary organizations including general

neighborhood organizations, block watch organizations, religious and community outreach organizations and special interests groups. Research reported in this article draws heavily on observations from the (in terms of reported and observed membership and attendance at public meetings) of these organizations.

The Neighborhood Organization

The most public and visible activities of the largest neighborhood organization are facilitated by its “Crime and Safety Committee.” The committee is headed by a chairperson who facilitates meetings, takes minutes and reports to the Board of the Directors. Unlike other committees of the organization, the meetings of the Crime and Safety Committee are designed for and encourage public participation. The committee hosts monthly open “business” meetings as well as facilitating special events. I attended 23 meetings or events between August 2008 and July 2010 as well as interviewing three of the core members, including the police officer who represented the city’s community orienting police taskforce at the meetings. I initially introduced myself to the chair of the meeting, with whom I was previously unacquainted, as a graduate student who lived in the neighborhood and was doing research on crime. He subsequently introduced me as “a neighbor who is a researcher” at three consecutive meetings before dropping the special introduction.

The meetings, open to the general public, were held at both a Veteran’s Hall and a local church during the time I did my observations. The average attendance at monthly meetings was five people which usually included at least three from a core group of eight regular attendees. The smallest meeting had only three in attendance and the largest was

during a special city-wide “Night Out Against Crime” meeting where forty-five people were in attendance. The core attendees were all white, with the exception of the police officer who was a black male. All core attendees were homeowners and paying members of the organization. With few exceptions, the infrequent, but repeat, attendees were also homeowners but I can not substantiate if they were paying members of the organization. Moreover, I have no way of knowing the membership or home-owning status of attendees at the larger special-presentation meetings. In the 23 meetings I attended, I only observed three people of color, one Asian woman and one Black woman, both lesbian partners of white women. The other person of color was my husband. Meetings generally lasted between forty-five minutes to an hour with a fairly set agenda. The meetings were casual, but structured to include introductions, discussions of both old and new problems as well as input from the police officer. I believed that the meetings provided a unique lens through which to watch as residents constructed and responded to “neighborhood problems.”

The range of issues brought to the meetings included everything from complaints about a neighborhood dog urinating on a prized flower-garden to a reported sexual assault of an underage girl who had been served drinks at a local bar. Regularly discussed at meetings were problems with less serious kinds of incivilities such as noise complaints, litter and loitering. Regular agenda items included a call for discussion about prostitution and “problem properties”. I will discuss these in more detail below. It is sufficient to note here that these meetings do not necessarily represent the “Reality” of crime in the neighborhood anymore than Darin’s sign proclaimed the “Reality” of his anti-crime stance. Instead these meetings brought together residents who partly through

their talk constituted “problems” and directed social control efforts accordingly. I will return to this point in the conclusion.

I regularly took open notes at the meetings I attended. This felt comfortable and did not appear to provoke reaction from other attendees as note-taking can be considered a fairly normative aspect of meeting settings. The chairman generally also took notes ostensibly to prepare meeting minutes for the Board of Directors. I occasionally had access to these minutes when they were intermittently posted on the organization’s website. Additionally, I used the contacts I made at these meetings to secure some of the in-depth interviews for the project. These interviews were semi-structured and probed residents’ reasons for moving to the neighborhood, descriptions of neighborhood life, involvement in neighborhood organizations, experiences with crime and victimization and visions of the future neighborhood. Each interview was conducted at the participants’ choice of their home or a public setting and they lasted between 25 minutes and 2 hours. Transcripts or annotations were made of the interviews for subsequent coding and analysis. Data analysis was congruent with the larger project and included extensive use of memo writing as an analytical tool (Charmaz 2004, 2006). For this paper, I was also influenced by the extended case method approach to ethnographic research (cf. Buroway 1998). In particular, this approach calls for a focus on extending theory by way of applying and testing the “fit” of data from the field. In this way the analysis is worked out in the writing of the ethnographic text. The cases presented below are offered for the purpose of developing new directions for research into the operation of informal social control.

Part One: “Neighborhood Problems” Give Rise to Informal Social Control

This part of the analysis presents a first-order question often taken for granted in research on informal social control. What are the instances of crime and/or disorder that initiate collective neighborhood control? How are these constructed and what might they suggest about the “common good” of a particular neighborhood context?

Talking about Neighborhood Problems: Prostitutes and “Problem Properties”

Without a doubt the most frequently discussed issues at the Crime and Safety meetings were suspected²¹ prostitution activity and what was solicited as concerns about “problem properties.” I present the case of complaints and responses to prostitution first and then turn to a discussion of how residents construct “problem properties.” I suggest that talking about these at the neighborhood meeting signals their violation of the common good and discursively constitutes their status as neighborhood problems (Lyons 1999). In general, both complaints are examples of what academics and law enforcement officials would categorize as “social disorder” (Katz, Webb and Schaefer 2001:827; see also Wilson and Kelling 1982). In some areas of the United States, notably New York City starting in the mid-1990’s, law enforcement have taken a hard line on policing such “disorder offenses” (Katz et al. 2001:825; see also Lyons 1999; Murphy and Venkatesh 2006). Officers had been encouraged to aggressively attend to “quality of life” issues such as street drug dealing, graffiti taggers, prostitutes and other “suspicious persons” (Bass 2001: 166). Scholars have variously referred to this style of policing as “quality-of-life” policing (Katz et al.: 826) or “zero-tolerance policing” (Bass 2001:167). This has not been the model for everyday police strategy in the area under study. The local

police force servicing Hilltop Circle does engage in a kind of quality-of-life policing during special operation “sweeps” that generally occur once to twice a year (Interview August 2008). Institutionally speaking, the local police force does not give special priority to social and physical disorder. This is not the case with the local neighborhood organization and the residents who attend their Crime and Safety meetings.

“The ho’s have to go”: Local sentiment and control strategies

Attendees at the “Crime and Safety” meeting regularly discussed issues pertaining to prostitution in the neighborhood. The activity reported was centered on a particular five block stretch of road and the immediately adjoining offshoots of the area. This central area of prostitution activity was near the homes of three core members of the committee and several of the regular visitors to the meeting. Residents typically used the meeting to update each other and even swap stories, sometimes in a kind of dueling fashion as illustrated in this exchange below:

Marge: Well, I saw my first hooker of the year last night.

Mark: Really? I’ve already seen three that I know are working. Two are new but out of that same motel apartment

Marge: Really? What do they look like?

Mark: The usual: ugly, dirty, skanky and strung out!

Marge: But then there’s that librarian looking one? She wears the glasses you know? I don’t know how she keeps this up for so many years. I’ve called on her so many times, but I don’t think she’s ever been arrested. Maybe because she’s pretty (laughs). And she really does look like a librarian (laughter).

Mark: I wait ‘til they get in the car and then I write the license number down and call it in with a direction. I think that helps [the police] more. (Field notes, April 2009)

In general, the meetings serve as a way for residents to vent their frustrations and compare notes, so to speak. Their talking at the meeting keeps prostitution on the

agenda, literally, effectively constructing it as a “problem.” This is done for (and with) the audience of fellow residents as well as for any members of the public sphere who might attend a meeting, including police officers and local government representatives. The residents sometimes ask the community police officer in attendance to alert someone at the agency that “it’s getting worse” or that suspected customers are parking their cars in the driveway of a particular house to avoid detection.

Prostitution is indisputably a criminal act subject to arrest and punishment under the law in most parts of the United States, including the area encompassing Hilltop Circle. Legal codes applied to prostitution generally address the behavior of one of three parties: 1) the prostitutes, 2) those who manage or control access to the prostitutes or 3) those that purchase or attempt to purchase sexual services (Monroe 2005; Murphy and Venkatesh 2006). The lack of ambiguity regarding the general criminality of prostitution obscures the subtleties of enforcing criminal codes. Law enforcement must be attentive to evidentiary concerns especially as they regard substantiating the soliciting of sex and witnessing the transfer of money. Most commonly law enforcement agencies rely on specialized operations which utilize undercover officers to pose as “john’s” (customers) (Weitzer 1999) with the effect being an inequitable enforcement of the law where women prostitutes are disproportionately targeted (Monroe 2005). My interview with a local police officer confirms that with this is consistent with the general policing strategy in Hilltop Circle:

Jodi: How does [the police department] deal with prostitution in general?

Officer: Well, I’ll tell ya, it isn’t easy to get rid of. I’ll tell you that much. We do use undercovers, right over there in fact (motioning to the area outside our interview location). We just did a thing not too long ago but you know, I think we caught three²²? But really, we can’t be out here like that all the time. We do make

arrests sometimes when we see a woman we think is working. But it's harder. And these girls, they're right back out on the street. Most are repeat offenders.

Jodi: What about the johns?

Officer: Well now that's funny you'd ask because there's that website (laughs) [referencing an earlier discussion in the Crime and Safety meeting about a website that used to publish the pictures of men arrested for soliciting prostitution] but really unless we catch them in the act of something, which we do, like right there where that church parking lot is (laughs). That's a popular spot. But there are few places on the other side of town too. You can't really stop people from doing what they're gonna do, you know? I mean we try. We do. But I'm not going to lie, it's been around and it's likely gonna stay around. Somewhere anyway. What these folks are doing here in this neighborhood, this is good stuff because they're making it known that we're gonna get a call. Even if we can't make an arrest we do try to come through if there is a complaint.

The officer alludes to the importance of the strategies used by local residents in securing police presence in the area. This cooperation between local law enforcement and neighborhood residents is demonstrative of the intervention strategy known as “new parochialism” (Carr 2005). The officers’ remarks attest to the success residents have had in establishing relationships with and gaining the support of public institutions, in this case the police force. As I describe below, residents have also engaged in other form of voluntary activism among themselves.

Two residents in particular were quite vocal and active in their efforts to rid the neighborhood of suspected prostitution. These residents were not only “willing to intervene” but often persistent and even aggressive in their intervention efforts. First, Heidi was a single woman in her late 30s who was a homeowner in the five block area identified as most problematic. She was not a regular attendee at the meetings but would come when there was an “incident” so she could “make everyone aware”. She encouraged others to “walk right up to those girls and tell them to take their ass elsewhere” because “they don’t belong here.” She was lively and animated in her

presentation, often imitating the body language and dialect of the women she confronted. Her stories always elicited a positive response and laughter from the other attendees, including the police officer. At one meeting, she reported that a rock had been thrown through the window of her house and that she was about to install video cameras because “these ‘ho’s have got to go!” (Field notes, May 2009). Several attendees at the meeting shared information and advice about home security systems to assist Heidi in her endeavor. Heidi’s strategy of direct confrontation is an example of informal social control at the traditional parochial level (Bursik and Grasmick 1993; Hunter 1985)

A second “champion” (Carr 2005:31) for direct intervention was a gay male in his sixties who lived in the neighborhood with his partner and owned several rental properties there. Stan was not a regular attendee at Crime and Safety meetings but was a core member of the larger neighborhood organization. He had been involved with the group since its inception providing both personal and financial support. Stan had taken it upon himself to take pictures of the prostitutes he spotted on the street. He attended meetings three times during my observation period and twice talked extensively about his strategy of intervention, urging others to also adopt it. Here is an excerpt from my field notes (September 2008):

During introductions Stan asks if he can talk about “the hookers”. Tim (the chair person) lets him know that “it’s on the agenda” and adds, “we’re looking forward to it Stan” to which he and the other two core members laugh. ... After we finish the first agenda item, Tim asks Stan if he’d like to share his concern. Stan thanks Tim and proceeds to review the addresses of his home and three of his rental properties that are in or near the “main hooker corners” in the neighborhood. He says, “I’ve decided that we need to do more to run these hookers out of our neighborhood.” He tells the group how he has started taking pictures of “them” with his cell phone: “I drove right up to one girl the other day and said ‘are you working?’ She said ‘sure am honey’ and I had pulled my phone out and snapped her picture. Everyone has a camera phone these days. We

could all do it!” “What are you going to do with the pictures?” asks Tim. “Show ‘em to the cops” he says. Tim asks, “What can they do with them?” and then directing his question to Officer Brown, “Would the police use pictures like that?” Officer Brown replies that Stan “can call Vice to see if they are interested.” His tone does not confer a confidence that police would take an interest in the pictures. He adds that the police are “aware” there is a problem and that he doesn’t know if taking pictures of the women is a good idea, “someone could get angry” he says. Several attendees agree that they wouldn’t feel comfortable with such direct action and feared it could lead to violence.

Stan returned to the meeting the next month to register his complaint with a vacant property adjoining one of his rentals. He told how “the hookers and junkies” had been “using it as their own” and that they shouted obscenities at him when he confronted them. He indicated that he could tolerate the obscenities but that “they need to stop shitting on my porch!” I had to wonder if this wasn’t a form of retaliation for Stan’s confrontational intervention style. No one present at the meeting voiced this possibility but like Heidi’s incident above, it seems likely that Stan’s experience is related to his “style” of intervention. Moreover, although neither complaint involved direct physical violence, each might be understood as retaliatory actions precipitated by a lack of “respect” or a violation of the “code of the street” (Anderson 1994, 1999). This possibility was supported by an interview with a local woman who was not affiliated with the neighborhood organization. Rita, a single-mother of two, had rented a house adjacent to the problem prostitution area for the last eight years. She told me during her interview that the prostitutes “do not bother me none.” She questioned whether there really was a “problem” with prostitution or if perhaps “people just get out of their lane.” In asking for clarification she told me that she believes some of the women might “resort” to prostitution but are not “prostitutes.” She implies the importance of respect when she says:

...there are people here that just show their ass you know? Treat them ree-aal mean. But you've got to play with those girls not against them. They ran my old neighbor right out of here. She'd always be harassing them and they'd pull her tulips up. All of them. Destroyed her garden. They sure did. I don't have any problems with them (Interview, November 2009).

Rita's interview also highlights the issue of whether the local residents are really targeting "prostitutes". On the one hand, her comments reflect the research findings that street prostitution is generally not a long-term career for women but may instead be a response to addiction, poverty and abuse (Monroe 2005; Murphy and Venkatesh 2007; Raphael 2004; Weitzer 1999). It is entirely possible that some women targeted by local residents are not engaged in an ongoing pattern of prostitution. On the other hand, it brings to mind the issue of how it is that residents actually determine which women are prostitutes? The description above by Mark (e.g., "ugly, dirty, skanky, and strung out") is not the kind of detail that a sketch artist would use to produce an image, but is instead a more general indictment of a *kind of person*. The label "prostitute" is without a doubt a stigmatized identity, the application of which effectively "spoils" the identity of its recipient (Becker 1963; Goffman 1963). Here Rita's comments suggest the relevance of deviance scholarship where one might question whether the "willingness to intervene" may be counter-productive leading women to adopt a more entrenched identity as a "prostitute" through the process of secondary deviance (Lemert 1951).

In focusing on the case of informal social control of prostitution in this neighborhood we can see how residents cooperate with both each other and law enforcement officials to construct the nature and extent of the "problem." Residents' behavior is illustrative of social control at two levels: the parochial level as identified in Hunter's (1985) model and new parochialism as conceptualized by Carr (2005). Looking

beyond the coordination of efforts, or the level of social control, we might also learn something about the *social process* of informal social control. In this sense, talk about prostitution and the labeling of certain women as prostitutes is part of an ongoing pattern of social differentiation in the neighborhood. The discursive strategies deployed in the production of informal social control simultaneously construct difference in the field of the neighborhood (Bourdieu 1992; Erickson 1996; Lyons 1999).

Constructing “Problem Properties”: Noise Complaints, Drug Dealing and Crack Houses

The second consistent topic addressed at Crime and Safety meetings was the standing agenda item “Problem Properties”. This was a catch-all term used to solicit reports of attendees’ objections with specific addresses. These complaints included reports of such things as unkempt yards, unsupervised children, barking dogs, disturbances at vacant properties and suspected drug dealing. Like prostitution these are also generally considered “social disorder” offenses (Katz et al. 2001:827; see also Wilson and Kelling 1982). Two of the most commonly discussed problems involved noise complaints and suspected drug activity. I will illustrate and discuss each in order to draw out the theoretically relevant issues embedded in this case of neighborhood informal social control.

Resident noise complaints involved both daytime and nighttime disturbances. Objections were registered against blaring music, barking dogs, loud adults and boisterous children. In the case of objections to people, the culprits were described with terms such as “those kids”, “that family”, “a big group” or “those guys”. I never heard anyone directly reference race in their complaint, possibly because meeting attendees

defined the space as “a context in which explicit discussion of [class and race] is widely thought to be impolite” (Maher 2004). There were indications that these complaints were largely about the behavior of black residents. Consider the following examples from meeting complaints:

The worst house is the 2nd from the end! They just sit on their porch and “yell-speak”! They’re always drinking 40’s and playing cards. These guys are at it all day, every day. And most nights too. They need to get a job. A real job.

...the front porch of that blue house that’s for sale? I’ve called Howard Hanna several times because it seems the kids, mostly from that family next door, have decided it is a good clubhouse. Boys mostly. Mostly young thug-types.

It’s obnoxious on the weekends. I’m just trying to do yard work and I have to endure this “Jesus Saves” music. It’s better than the “Kill Whitey” music from the last group that lived there. And they don’t cuss at each other, but still, how do you get people to understand we don’t need to hear their music? What’s the standard for when loud is too loud?

Similarly to the previous case of prostitution, the meeting provides an opportunity for residents to be heard and to register their dissatisfaction with their neighbors. However, in this case, residents are “trained” in how to formally construct their complaints as “nuisance complaints”. Officer Brown routinely instructs attendees to call the non-emergency police number and specifically use the word “nuisance” in their report of the problem behavior. He explains that three recorded complaints is “supposed to trigger” a letter to the landlord who can be fined if s/he doesn’t respond. Officer Brown notes that landlords can more easily facilitate quick evictions when nuisance complaints are substantiated. He explains that the “difficulty” is that “these knuckleheads” must still be “showing out” when officers arrive in order for an official nuisance complaint to be recorded (Field Notes, August 2009). This is a particularly good example of new

parochialism in that residents not only garner the support of formal institutions, but are mobilizing the additional resource of “training” in how to do so most effectively. It is important to note that nuisance complaints can only be registered against rental properties, thus revealing the unearned privilege of homeownership as providing immunity to this formal sanction. The fact that most meeting attendees are homeowners signals the disproportionate power they may have in leveraging strategies of new parochialism against “problem properties.”

Noise complaints are often connected to or precursors for reports of suspected drug activity at “problem properties.” These complaints take the form of “suspicious behavior” that is presumed to signal “drug dealing” or mark a property as a “crack house.” Common descriptions of behavior constructed as suspicious included: “frequent visitors,” “lots of comings and goings,” “lots of traffic,” “lights on at odd hours,” and “partying all the time.” With the exception of one complaint about the “distinct odor of marijuana,” no one reported having actually seen drug transactions occurring. The nature of the complaints was not about open-air drug markets, but about suspected use and/or selling of drugs out of “problem properties.” Additionally, no attendee reported having been approached by any of the “suspects” to buy drugs. Officer Brown typically noted addresses of suspected drug activity in his notebook and advised complaining residents to contact the Narcotics Division with any specific information they might have. Additionally, Officer Brown would update the meeting attendees when there had been a major raid in the area. This information sharing is illustrative of the “eyes and ears” function of neighborhood organizations that underpins community policing efforts (Carr 2005:9).

The format of presenting “problem properties” at the meeting was of reporting, not discussion or dialogue. I never observed attendees question the veracity of a report or otherwise dispute the interpretation of suspicious behavior as drug-related. I am not suggesting that residents maliciously mis-reported events or deliberately lodged false allegations. What I am suggesting is that the purpose and format of the meeting facilitated the construction of behavior as suspicious and/or drug-related. In this way, the meeting became a site of production where “talk of crime” (Maher 2004) was transformed into neighborhood problems and resources (fellow residents and law enforcement) were potentially mobilized for intervention (see also Lyons 1999). Moreover, with the exception of drug dealing, which shares characteristics with prostitution in the evidentiary requirements for issuing violations; these neighborhood problems are far more ambiguous with respect to whether they fall under the jurisdiction of the law. In this case, the construction of any one of them as a “social problem” is more dependent on the nature of the presentation (Kitsuse and Spector 1973; Spector and Kitsuse 1973). For this reason, I argue that the case of “problem properties” reveals the more general *social processes* involved in influencing residents’ willingness to intervene. Next, I consider the value of “negative cases” (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Miles and Huberman 1994) for further theoretical elaboration (Strauss and Corbin 1994; Vaughn 1992).

Part Two: Considering Instances of Collective In-Activity

In the second half of this paper, I offer a negative case analysis (Creswell 1998) as a way to further refine my theoretical elaboration. One strength of ethnography is that researchers are not dependent only on what they are told about a setting; but instead, can

build on what they have observed in the field to produce context-rich accounts of social action (Khan and Jerolmack 2013:12). The story of drug use in Hilltop Circle reveals the multi-layered, and even contradictory, nature of the construction of neighborhood problems.

Non-Issues: “Tolerated Deviance” and Wayward Youth

About a year after that sign (“We Report All Crimes on Our Block!”) appeared at my house, more were distributed at a Committee-sponsored event celebrating “The National Night Out Against Crime”. This initiative is a national community-oriented policing event. The City promoted the event on local billboards, encouraging neighbors to get to know one another through sponsoring gatherings. The rhetoric of the event is consistent with social interventions promoting collective efficacy and encouraging strategies of intervention aligned with new parochialism. The invitation to get together with neighbors ostensibly promotes the kind of mutual trust and solidarity upon which the “willingness to intervene” is presumed to be facilitated. The question that kept plaguing me was “Do you *really* report *all* crimes on the block”? I was deeper into my field research at this point and I happened to know that the answer was “No”. And not a “lets-play-semantic-games” kind of “we couldn’t possibly report *all* crimes”; but instead, a more resounding “No. There are only certain instances of criminality that provoke collective responses around here.” I want to briefly consider two cases of collective inactivity that provide insights regarding the overall operation of informal social control in this neighborhood.

Marijuana: Habitus and Tolerated Deviance

Hilltop Circle is a favorite among artists and musicians in the area. Many local residents are accomplished at their art with several nationally known musicians coming out of the neighborhood over the last three decades. The neighborhood sponsored art and music festivals bear witness to a neighborhood identity shaped by these creative types (see also Maher 1999 on role of art fairs in inner-city neighborhoods undergoing renewal). The association of artists with drug use has been established elsewhere in the literature (see Golub and Johnson 1999; Goode 1969, 2008; Sandberg 2013). I argue that the concentration of artists and musicians may be one explanation for what I found to be both a diverse and substantial supply of illegal drugs in the neighborhood. I concentrate first on the presence and use of marijuana (cannabis) to illustrate the variable nature of informal social control campaigns.

Sandberg (2013:63) asserts that “cannabis [marijuana] is by far the most frequently used illegal drug in the world”. It is no longer only concentrated among marginalized groups, but is used by individuals throughout Western populations (Amos, Wiltshire, Bostock, Haw, and McNeill 2004; Annis 1997; Goode 2008; Hathaway 1997b). Hathaway (1997a, 1997b) discusses marijuana as a lifestyle preference that is best understood as a kind of “tolerable deviance.” Evidence of widespread agreement with this would be the growing number of localities in the United States and abroad that have changed laws regarding the criminality of the marijuana. Nonetheless, it is important to note that in the United States, despite changes at local and state levels, marijuana cultivation, possession and use are violations of federal law. Moreover, marijuana is illegal in the City and State where this research was conducted.

My research suggests that marijuana is widely available in Hilltop Circle. It is both imported into the neighborhood as a saleable product as well as cultivated at various locations. The supply includes a diverse range of strains, potencies and prices with everything from “dirt weed” (low quality with low levels of THC) to “kind bud” (high potency designer strains with high THC concentrations) available for purchase. From my observations, I argue that marijuana, as a recreational drug, is popular across the various sub-segments of the neighborhood population. It is not a “white” or “black” or “rich” or “poor” thing as far as general use is concerned. Stylistic differences do exist between methods of procuring the drug, preferences for different types of product (e.g., variable growing conditions and botanical strains) as well as preferred methods for utilizing the drug (e.g., way it is prepared, how it is smoked, preparation of edibles). These stylistic differences have been observed and discussed in more detail by others (see for example Curtis, Wendel, and Spunt 2002; Golub and Johnson 1999; Sanberg 2013; Zimmerman and Wieder 1977).

As it relates to this paper, I am interested in the contradiction posed by the ubiquitous presence of marijuana and the absence of any sustained narrative about a “marijuana problem” in the neighborhood. I argue that this can be explained by understanding marijuana use as consistent with the habitus, or lifestyle habits and values, of gentrifiers who embrace or are otherwise tolerant of “alternative” lifestyle practices (Bourdieu 1984, 1992; Webb et al. 2002). I argue that because gentrifiers run the neighborhood organization, their cultural or moral outlook informs the agenda of the collective efforts of the organization. I am not arguing that marijuana use is openly embraced or promoted, but that it is not defined as a problem in the same way as the

suspected drug use of poor black residents. I indicated above that the residents routinely report on suspected drug use and dealing at “problem properties,” most commonly making reference to crack cocaine when identifying the suspected substance. My research confirms that several regular and core members of the neighborhood organization use marijuana at least on occasion and an additional member cultivates it for personal use. Moreover, I was able to establish that the drug of choice at two of the chronically “problem properties” was in fact marijuana, albeit a kind that would likely be rejected by middle-class residents. The difference here is akin to other socio-cultural differences of “taste” such as preference for beer (e.g., “40 ounce” bottles of beer versus micro-brew beers) bearing on “lifestyle” distinctions (Hurst 2000: 59-78; Stebbins 1997). Social control efforts that target one drug-use behavior over another can be read as part of the process of social differentiation, especially as it relates to marking difference through “taste” (Bourdieu 1984, 1992; See also Sandberg 2013).

In discussing the contingent nature of defining “drug use,” Goode (1969:85) observes “What society selects as crucial to perceive about drugs, and what it ignores, tells us a great deal about its cultural fabric.” Applying this to Hilltop Circle suggests that the concern with “drugs” expressed at neighborhood meetings may reveal less about an “anti-crime/anti-drug” crusade, and more about the clash of “class and lifestyle” (Pattillo 2003:72). This is particularly likely given the sometimes uneasy negotiation of public space encountered in gentrifying neighborhoods where “people who may not have intended to be neighbors” come together geographically but continue to have “varied resources and traditions, disparate visions of place, and contrasting strategies for making a neighborhood home” (Williams 1985:251; see also Anderson 1990:207-236; Lofland

33, 64-70, 119). The role of power and domination is illustrated as the neighborhood organization partners with the local police department and, as described above, work together to carve out moral boundaries. In the contested realm of “criminality” and “order,” police serve as “contemporary pawn brokers of reality” (Goode 1969:85) at the behest of a privileged segment of the neighborhood.

Some may argue the neighborhood organization’s opposition to crack cocaine is because, unlike marijuana, crack is a “hard drug” (Golub and Johnson 1999). There are a couple of points to keep in mind here. First, I am not making an argument about the “goodness” versus “badness” of marijuana or cocaine. My argument goes to the social processes involved in the definition of crime. Second, I use the example of the prevalence of marijuana not to normalize its use, but to illustrate that its use is not among isolated subgroups. Generally speaking, the prevalence and extent of illicit drug use of any kind would be concern for neighborhood activists. Third, I suggest that despite the rhetoric of anti-crime signs, residents choose not report “crimes” in which they or their friends are implicated or otherwise ambivalent about. This is consistent with previous scholarship that suggests that social ties can inhibit informal social control (Pattillo 1998; Pattillo-McCoy 1999; Venkatesh 2005).

Finally, I am not offering a conspiracy interpretation of the neighborhood organization’s efforts to maintain safety and order in their neighborhood. I do not suggest deliberate “white-washing” is the motivation for constructing “problems” or for primarily directing surveillance and intervention efforts at poor and black residents. I argue instead that these social processes and cultural mechanisms are rooted in the kinds of unconscious dispositions about the social world characteristic of *habitus* (Bourdieu

1984). In this way the working of power is disguised in the everyday practices of neighborhood residents. Let me provide a “layered account²³” (Ronai 1995) to illustrate:

Adelaide is a single woman in her mid-fifties who owns a house deep in the transitional area of the neighborhood. She is a physically striking woman with a keen intellect who never had children and lives alone with her beloved dogs. Her tastes in music and art are eclectic, as is her social network. She is a long-time member of the neighborhood organization often volunteering, although only occasionally following through. Her home was once a two-unit rental with a kitchen on the second floor. During my fieldwork she invited a friend, Samantha, to rent the space in the upstairs of her home. She hadn't rented it previously but a developing friendship seduced her desire to ease the burden of making ends meet by taking on a tenant. The space, while having a private bedroom area and separate kitchen, was accessed by the common doors and meant a lot of intermingling was at least a possibility. Over time she and Sam, who was 20 years her junior, became very close spending much of their social time together with overlapping friendship networks. Their shared interests in good food, good drinks and good vibes cemented a mother-sister-friend camaraderie so close that outsiders often mistook them as lesbian lovers.

The two were regular marijuana smokers who maintained their own supply and often shared with their friends. Neither woman was particularly finicky about the quality of the marijuana, but each was guided instead by availability and price. Over time, Sam secured a connection with access to a steady and affordable supply of “mid-grade” marijuana. She began to supply Adelaide by splitting the cost and quantity each time she'd make a purchase. This arrangement carried on for several months ceasing only after an emotionally charged fight that resulted in Sam moving out of Adelaide's home.

The tension started after Sam returned home from the neighborhood gas station one afternoon and proceeded to split up the small quantity of marijuana she had just purchased. As Sam tells it to me, this was a ritual that had occurred on numerous occasions. The difference this time was that Adelaide knew that Sam had left to purchase cigarettes at the gas station and put together that she had picked up the marijuana there as well. Adelaide was aghast that “they” were “dealing” marijuana out of the gas station. Adelaide's emotional reaction triggered an equally emotional outburst from Sam who challenged that “they” weren't “dealing” marijuana out of the gas station any more than Adelaide was “dealing” marijuana out of her home. Sam, having a close relationship with the source of the marijuana, had stopped by the woman's place of employment to pick up a previously arranged quantity of marijuana. In the context of Sam's moral

universe this wasn't any different than any other kind of exchange. Adelaide vehemently disagreed and charged that "they" were probably also selling other drugs there too. She argued that this endangered the neighborhood and threatened to report it to the police. This threat broke the disagreement wide open and led to charges of racism by Sam against Adelaide (the contact was a black woman) and precipitated a deep rift that ended with Sam moving out less than a month later.

Out of this conflict, I draw attention to the more general tendency of middle-class residents to see their own deviant and/or criminal behavior as fundamentally "different" from that which they deem problematic in the neighborhood. Sam felt deeply betrayed by Adelaide's threat to bring the gas station to the attention of police as she had more than a transactional relationship with the source of the marijuana. She no more considered this woman "a drug dealer" than she considered herself or Adelaide to be dealers. She informed me that Adelaide knew this woman to be the source of the marijuana she had been smoking for months and took no offense until finding out it was transferred at the gas station. Moreover she confided in me that Adelaide was not only regularly smoking marijuana, but had recently begun experimenting with growing the plant. Sam's deepest disappointment was that she felt her close friend had revealed herself as hypocritical and racist, a charge Adelaide rejected.

With regards to the operation of informal social control, I see this account as illustrating three issues of theoretical import. First, the exercise of informal social control is predicated on the perception, identification and/or definition of some instance of behavior as "a problem." The problem does not have to be criminal in nature, as the attention to issues of "disorder" in the literature attests (for example Sampson and Raudenbush 2001, 2004). I believe the narrative above illustrates the role of implicit bias (Bobo 2001; Fiske 2005) that is perhaps less obvious in the other examples in this article.

I do not believe Adelaide intended to be racist, but instead she saw the behavior and context of Sam's source as fundamentally different from her own behavior. I argue this is in part because she, and others in the neighborhood organization, had been steeped in the cultural stereotypes of a historically and structurally racist society. Their perceptions of "problems" are influenced by prevailing cultural narratives linking blacks to crime, violence, poverty and other undesirable characteristics (Sampson and Raudenbush, 2004: 320; also Bobo and Massagli 2001; Quillian and Pager 2001).

Second, I suggest a consideration of the value of these social processes for meaning-making activities involved in initiating instances of informal social control. The neighborhood effects literature advances an embedded "essentialist notion" of crime and disorder where the implicit assumption is that "residents' perceptions map neatly onto objectively observable" instances of crime and disorder (Sampson and Raudenbush 2004:320)²⁴. Goode addresses this similarly in his 1969 article "Marijuana and the Politics of Reality" where he observes:

No individual views reality directly, "in the raw," so to speak...The more complex the society, the greater the number of competing versions concerning reality...The problem becomes, then, a matter of *moral hegemony*, of legitimating one distinctive view of the world, and of discrediting competing views (83-84).

In the context of neighborhood efforts to combat crime, the neighborhood organization becomes a tool for furthering the moral hegemony of the participants in that organization, who also happen to be of the privileged class in this setting. Other scholars have observed that middle and upper class individuals tend to have more resources at their disposal to conceal and/or manage their criminal conduct (see for example McCoy, McGuire, Curtis, and Spunt 2005; Reinerman and Levine 1989; Slavin 2004; Sterk-

Elifson 1996). This research suggests they may also be able to mobilize outside resources to this end.

Finally, the case of marijuana use can also illustrate the way that social networks can facilitate crime. Earlier research had stressed the importance of social ties as mediating factors in fostering the ability of communities to engage in informal social control (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974; Sampson and Groves 1989; Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997; Silver and Miller 2004; Warner and Rountree 1997). Other scholars have since argued that uncritical reliance on the *mere presence* of social networks in a community fails to recognize that such networks can also facilitate criminal behavior (cf. Anderson 1999; Bellair 1997; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003; Pattillo 1998; Pattillo-McCoy 1999; Reiss 1986; Venkatesh 2005). These scholars primarily argue that residents are often unwilling to report crimes in which their “kin and neighborly networks” are implicated (Pattillo 1998:770). Instead, they may “manage” (as opposed to control) so as to prevent violence but not eradicate crime altogether. This research was an important corrective to earlier work that had suggested people who tolerate crime hold different normative values altogether (Sampson and Bartusch 1998). In Hilltop Circle surveillance and control efforts are directed at the suspected drug use of the poor and black residents, even in instances where both groups are known to be using the same illegal drugs.

Heroin: Hipsters and “Wayward Youth”

In another case of considering what “inactivity” can tell us about informal social control, I will briefly discuss heroin use in the neighborhood. My research suggests that heroin use is a growing staple in the local drug scene. My observations suggest it is popular among the twenty-something “hipsters” in the neighborhood who prefer an

opiate-alcohol combination to other types of drugs, particularly any kind of “uppers.” This is consistent with other national reports (Doyle 2011) and local news reports (Meyer 2010). These users do not fit the profile of the stereotypical “junkie” and generally consider themselves as casual or experimental users (see also Draus, Rudy, and Greenwald 2010). The practice of injecting the drug is often stigmatized and users often prefer to inhale the smoke produced by heating the drug, sometimes referred to as “chasing the dragon” (Golub and Johnson 1999, 2005; Meyer 2010).

On one occasion, a raid on an apartment in Hilltop Circle netted a sizable amount of heroin and was even covered in the City paper (November 18, 2009). The scene surrounding this raid drew a crowd of at least 15 bystanders who had come to see why the place was “all lit up.” This was precisely the kind of police activity that produced inquiries (generally from attendees) and updates (from the police officer) at neighborhood meetings. I was eager to hear a full report at the next neighborhood meeting but it was not mentioned. I asked about the bust directly and the officer confirmed that it was indeed related to “a heroin ring” with its roots in the neighborhood (Field notes December 2009). This revelation did not provoke further questioning among those in attendance nor did a concern with heroin carry over to other meetings. This stands in stark contrast to the repeated reports of “crack dealing” and “crack houses” which are largely unsubstantiated and based on observations of the “suspicious behavior” of black neighbors (see Sampson and Raudenbush 2004 on implicit bias).

I am not suggesting that residents support the use of heroin, or even that it is a tolerable form deviance, like marijuana. Instead, I suggest it is a “negative case” that can deepen our understanding of the social processes related to the production of informal

social control (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Miles and Huberman 1994). The complete absence of heroin from the narrative of “problems” in the neighborhood is curious. My research would suggest that it is more than a “personal trouble” (Mills 1959). I know of five heroin overdoses that either occurred in the neighborhood or where the user was from the neighborhood during the period of my fieldwork. All were white males heavily involved in the music and art scene²⁵. Moreover, a November 5th, 2010 article in the City’s major newspaper reports an “alarming surge in heroin deaths” in the county over the previous three year period (Meyer 2010). I never heard a complaint about heroin at a neighborhood meeting or otherwise discussed by residents detailing “problems” in the neighborhood.

I would suggest three possible explanations for the absence of a narrative of concern about heroin in the neighborhood. First, I believe that although many of the neighborhood organization members knew at least one of the youth who overdosed on heroin, they understood these deaths as personal tragedies, not public issues. Addiction, understood as a disease, transforms the user from “bad” to “sick” and even into a “victim” upon her/his death (for a discussion of medicalization see Conrad and Schneider 1992). Second, acknowledging heroin as a “problem” in the neighborhood may call attention to the dark side of drugs in residents’ personal social networks. As noted above, research on social networks suggests they often facilitate criminal behavior as residents don’t want to report “their own.” It remains easier to extend sympathy and compassion for Jane Doe’s daughter, ex-boyfriend or other wayward youth than it does to confront the availability of deadly narcotics. Finally, acknowledging the presence of heroin as a problem would challenge the otherwise positive public narrative of the neighborhood.

This would counter the work done by neighborhood organizations to maintain a positive image through programming and event planning. Curiously, however, it may also contribute directly to the stated goal of the main organization to “improve the quality and vitality” of the neighborhood (Neighborhood Organization website).

These final observations on negative cases are included to show the potential for theoretical elaboration (Strauss and Corbin 1994; Vaughn 1992). This method reveals that unpacking informal social control into component processes can highlight the social nature of collective efficacy. Moreover, how and when residents intervene, particularly in ways consistent with new parochialism, can provide further specification of the nature of the “common good” as it relates to theoretical arguments about informal social control.

Discussion

Informal social control is a key construct in the criminological project to understand crime and crime control. What continues to intrigue scholars is the nature of the link between theoretical constructs reviewed above and actual social action (Carr 2003; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003; Sampson 2012; St. Jean 2007). This paper utilized data from extensive field research to interrogate the conditions under which informal social control was produced and articulated in a specific neighborhood setting. Although the results are idiographic, the explication of the mechanisms that link the kinds of behaviors identified as problematic with how residents do social control can be used to suggest ways to elaborate current theory.

I posed three questions at the beginning of this paper that directed attention to the inherently social nature of informal social control: How are “neighborhood problems”

defined?, How do residents intervene? And, what does collective intervention reveal about the nature of the common good? The answers from this research suggest that informal social control is not a dispassionate intervention response to obvious and unambiguous “criminal” (or otherwise deviant) situations. Instead, it is the product of collective negotiation and its articulation is not morally neutral. I argue informal social control is best understood as socially produced and accomplished through the joint meaning-making activities of residents. Moreover, I have presented evidence that suggests that instead of globally “fighting crime,” residents selectively engage in practices of informal social control. I argue that their selections are motivated by a local version of the “common good” rooted in their shared habitus and reinforced by particular styles of “doing neighborhood.” The end product is what I call *selective efficacy* and results in the reproduction of inequality through informal social control. Selective efficacy asks additional questions of the model of collective efficacy as it is presented in the extant literature.

Conclusion: A Theory of Selective Efficacy

Neighborhood organizations in particular may act as “claims-makers” in the process of articulating the boundaries of acceptable behavior. In doing so, they implicitly define the “common good” as that which is being threatened by the actions they seek to eradicate. Moreover, the “problems” identified and acted upon by the neighborhood organization reflect an underlying moral hegemony (Goode 1969:84) that I argue is more about lifestyles than “safety.” This begs the question if it is reasonable to accept the implicit assumption in the literature that the “common good” encompasses primarily the

“desire of community residents to live in safe and orderly environments that are free of predatory crime, especially interpersonal violence” (Sampson et al. 1997:918, see also Carr 2005; Pattillo 1998; St. Jean 2007). I suggest that this assumption, while likely widely shared by all people, is not the only, or even best, descriptor if our goal is to understand *how* informal social control is socially produced. I argue instead that the “common good” is more appropriately understood as produced in and through actual social action and likely varies across neighborhood contexts. In this setting, the production and articulation of informal social control is bound up with social differentiation in general and a more specific concern for property values as they are influenced by the general reputation of the neighborhood and aesthetic concerns.

In making these arguments I am not suggesting residents don’t legitimately want a safe environment. I would even suggest that they consciously believe that this is the project in which they are engaged. However, I would suggest the pre-emptive control of “suspicious” activity has more to do with the “kind of people” engaged in that activity than with their actual *suspected* behaviors (e.g., prostitution and crack use) (for a discussion of implicit bias in perceptions of general disorder see Sampson and Raudenbush 2004). I argue that the habitus of residents involved in the claims-making activities of the neighborhood organization offers them the possibility of minimizing their own complicity in “criminal” behavior by understanding it as something completely different than that of “others,” even to the point of mobilizing it as “distinction” through their involvement in the arts (Bourdieu 1984, 1992; Sandberg 2013:66). The end result is an over-surveillance of poor and black residents (see also Goffman 2009; Rios 2011). I conclude that in this neighborhood setting, informal social control, particularly as it

enacted through strategies of new parochialism, effectively mobilized neighborhood resources in ways that reproduced inequality. Future work may consider how these insights can usefully be applied in other settings as well as operationalized for use as variables in big data studies.

CHAPTER IV

MAKING A SCENE: A PROVOCATIVE EVOCATIVE (AUTO)ETHNOGRAPHY

Abstract

This article makes use of autoethnographic strategies to produce a “layered account” (Ronai 1995) of my experiences doing dissertation research. Self-reflexivity drives the analysis while innovative writing techniques re-present the data (Denzin 1989; Richardson and St. Pierre 2005) in ways that “play” with the standard format of a journal article and simultaneously present the work in the form of a “play.” This move underscores the ontological possibilities of the performative aspects of autoethnography not otherwise captured in conventional forms of writing. The result is a text that should both engage the reader and illustrate the ways evocative autoethnography can contribute to contemporary criminological research.

Keywords: autoethnography, reflexivity, neighborhood, informal social control

Introduction

The purpose of my dissertation research was to understand the ways in which informal social control is shaped by social and cultural influences.²⁶ I set out to provide an analysis of how local neighborhood context (e.g. social, cultural, material, and political) shapes the specific mechanisms of informal social control used by residents. I

carefully crafted a proposal that advanced Ethnography as the Proper methodology grounding my work epistemologically and ontologically in the tradition of realist ethnography (Charmaz 2006:396; Ellis and Bochner, 2006:432; see also Anderson 2006). I had planned to straightforwardly apply the methods belonging to the standard toolkit: observational methods, in-depth interviewing and document analysis (Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont, Lofland and Lofland 2001; LeCompte and Schensul 1999; Maxwell 2005; Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte 1999). Grounded theory procedures where “data collection and analysis proceed simultaneously” seemed the best fit for my research question (Charmaz 1983:110). My intentions were that my final product would be a concisely written ethnography presented in the traditional dissertation format

Hearing the voice of my Nana: “The road to hell is paved with good intentions honey.”
“Yep, sure is,” I think back at her as I am apparently on that road.

I find it alienating to try to reduce my work by adhering to formulaic journal-article stylistic norms. My experience is that attempting to transform my data in that fashion leaves me feeling like I’m not being true to my authentic self (Erickson 1995; see also Vannini and Franzese 2008). I re-read the seminal response-article of Ellis and Bochner (2006:436) and highlight the already underlined portion where Ellis “says” to Bochner,

As a woman and a feminist, I think it’s important not to lose sight of the politics of autoethnography. Analysis and theorizing on the pages of social science journals is the preserve of an elite class of professionals who wittingly or unwittingly divide the world into those who see the light and those kept in the dark. Autoethnography helps undercut conventions of writing that foster hierarchy and division.

I choose to defy academic conventions and begin to imagine other possibilities.

Ronai (1995:395-396) proposes the “layered account” as a way for “ethnographers to break out of conventional writing formats...(and)... expand the types of knowledge they are permitted to convey”. I begin to craft such an account.

Act I, Scene 1: Setting the Scene

In the beginning I was enamored with this neighborhood. Hilltop Circle²⁷, enjoys a “place identity” (Deneer 2010; Dixon and Durrheim 2000) that sets it apart from other areas of the city. It is variously described in newspaper articles and on the city’s website as a “hip,” “funky,” “eclectic,” and “pedestrian-friendly” “urban village.” I found the neighborhood to be an interesting and dynamic place, a refreshing alternative to growing up in a sterile, “everyone is middle-class”, overwhelmingly white suburb of this same city. I felt like it was what made my moving back to the Great Lakes region from the Pacific Northwest a reasonably bearable choice.

I had been living here for six years prior to identifying it as a potential research site. Having moved three times, I was in another rental, a three bedroom duplex, with my fifth roommate, a gay male, by the time I started to write about the neighborhood. My roommate and I were the only whites on this block. I was fascinated with the sketchy dealings around my new house. I’d watch what I was sure were open-air drug deals and prostitution activity as I smoked cigarettes from my attic window. I lived just a few blocks from my last place, a restored historic apartment building, that at times seemed worlds away.

I knew I was still squarely “in the neighborhood” because more than a dozen of the local hipsters, my friends, lived within shouting distance. They fondly referred to

“the ‘hood” and unproblematically claimed “ghetto living was easy living,” referencing cheap rents and their own low responsibility lives with no kids and mostly hourly-wage jobs (if they were employed at all). I was an anomaly of sorts already having a child *and* a job. These didn’t disqualify me as an “insider” because my child was a “love child” (read: accidental) signaling my carefree-ness even as I committed to “keeping” her. My “job” was an assistantship which meant I wasn’t a “sell-out” or “poser” because graduate school was largely approved as a way to prolong one’s entrance into the “real world.”

I am in a graduate seminar in Criminological Theory. I’m preparing for my comprehensive exams and I’m trying to nail down a dissertation topic. I find everything theoretically interesting right now.

A new couple moves in next door. They put a sign on their portion of our shared front yard that reads “*We Report ALL Crimes on our Block!*” I find this totally ironic because the new guy sits on the porch in the evening smoking marijuana out of a plumber’s pipe. This sign, and what it means theoretically, become my obsession.

I don’t report all crimes on my block. I have only called the police twice in the last five years. Once when all my CD’s were taken from my apartment and once when I witnessed a man pick up a woman by her neck and slam her against the brick wall outside my window. That first time, the officers told me there was nothing they could (or would?) do and that I shouldn’t leave my window cracked even if I was worried my cats would be too hot. I had only lived in the “city” for a year then and I couldn’t believe they

didn't take fingerprints (at least!!). That second time, the police responded fairly quickly and swiftly arrested the woman because she had a crack pipe in her purse.

Act I, Scene 2: Situating the Scene

I first saw the possibilities for an alternative sociology at the joint regional meetings of the North Central Sociological Association and the Midwest Sociological Society in Chicago in 2007. I attended a session where Laurel Richardson read from her then newly released book, *Last Writes: A Daybook for a Dying Friend* (2007).

I was literally moved to tears. I didn't stop to reflect on where her piece fit into the larger discipline or to ponder the legitimacy of the epistemological and ontological foundation of her work. I just felt it. I became wrapped up in it. I was moved by it. Her presentation "evoked" a response.

Her reading was followed by the traditional question-answer period and, perhaps predictably, the first audience question went something like this:

Thank you for your presentation. It was lovely. I really enjoyed it. But, um, I'm juuust curious, how is it Sociology?

And that evoked a response from me too. I felt like booing the person but then remembered that wasn't proper etiquette at professional meetings. And I remember a kind of murmuring seeming to come from the audience as if others were also pissed that this person had the nerve to taint our experience by evoking "the can(n)on" (see Sprague 1997).

Laurel Richardson answered pointedly, "Well, did you learn something about death and dying?" In my head, the crowd cheered. Richardson went on to explain how her writing about the death of her best friend, who incidentally was also a sociologist,

was thoroughly sociological. She basically took the audience to school on how the “personal” *is* the “sociological.” I have “Mills: SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION” written in my notes from that session. Richardson also offered a strong reminder that all sociological knowledge is produced by researchers who are only more or less held accountable for the ways in which their personal biography influences their work. She suggested alternative evaluative criterion for autoethnographic work which she published elsewhere (cf. Richardson 2000).

Muncey reports having a similar experience upon hearing Carolyn Ellis present at a conference. She says, “Her evocative performance captured my imagination and I started to see how the researcher’s vulnerable self could connect the practices of social science with the living of life” (2010:35).

My Nana: “You know what they say honey, CAR-PAY DEE-UM.” She never explained what she meant and I didn’t know what carpe diem meant until years after her death.

Act I, Scene 3: Behind the Scene

I begin to doubt my choice to return to graduate school having already left one Ph.D. program. I miss feeling like I’m making a difference in the world. I can’t quite figure out how this all matters and where it fits into my desire to be involved in social justice movements. I feel other-ed in academia: older than my colleagues, parenting a child alone, interested in marginalized topics and not fully invested in the reward system.

Now I am also struggling with the perceived need to constantly ‘bracket’ (Coffey 1999) my personal experiences within the research endeavor.

My ‘self’ was feeling strained, disconnected and increasingly alienated from what I saw as my “academic life.” I was burdened with the pressures of studying for and taking my comprehensive exams. I found it increasingly difficult to compartmentalize my “real life” from my “academic life” with the time demands of juggling a toddler, a new partner, final coursework, comprehensive exams and beginning the dissertation process. There seemed to be constant pressure to extract my “self” from my “academic life” while at the same time I had a growing need to expand my “self” in my “real life.” I had yet to realize that what “emerges out of the iterative process of doing research, while engaging in the process of living a life” is autoethnography (Muncey 2010: 2).

Act II, Scene 1: Experiencing the Scene

I’m living in my fourth place, a three-bedroom single-family rental, just blocks from the duplex. I’ve married my boyfriend who is black and is not the biological father of my only child. He has two daughters from a previous marriage who live with us every other weekend and for two weeks in the summer. We live in one of only three occupied houses of the six on the block. There are 23 single-apartment units across the street which have fairly constant tenant turnover. The neighbors directly adjacent to our place are the only “all white family” on the block. They are always complaining about “the black people at the end of the street.” My husband wonders if they know he is black. His physical appearance is undeniably that of a black male. No one is particularly friendly in

the traditional sense of the word, but we haven't had any problems to speak of either. Our friends and acquaintances live in other parts of the neighborhood.

It's only six o'clock but downright sweltering on this late June evening. I'm trying to organize the house a bit in the aftermath of our May wedding followed by the kids' visit. My husband has just returned from taking his oldest daughters back to their mother's house after a hectic week of summer visitation at our house. I had already dropped my daughter off at my mom's so I could enjoy some well deserved and much needed rest. We are newlyweds who'd already been raising three girls together for five years. We were excited about this next chapter of our life, a "together child."

I am only four days into knowing that I am pregnant but I'm sure that's why it feels unbearably hot. My husband suggests we retreat to the only air-conditioned space in the house, our bedroom. In my mind I'm sure he just wants to take advantage of not having kids in the house for the first time in I don't even know how long. I tell him it will only work if we can eat up there, which we never do, and only if he gets the food ready, which hardly ever happens. He agrees to both.

I head upstairs without reservation but stop first at the bathroom where I find that I am spotting. I'm scared. This never happened in my first pregnancy. I haven't even been in for my first pre-natal appointment and besides, today is Saturday. I know I don't want to go to the hospital and that rest will likely be the doctor's only recommendation so I continue on to the bedroom. The refreshing coolness cannot comfort me now. I meet my husband's expectant arrival with tears and we both cry knowing how badly we want to have a child together. We agree that resting is all I can do until Monday.

“Fuck you niggers! I’m going to kill you motherfuckers!” is about all I can make out from the shouting outside. I know immediately it is close to the house because the air conditioning is on full blast and I can still make out words. I also know that it is aggressive “this-might-lead-to-something” talk and not banter “shit-talking” kind of shouting. In the last several years, my suburban sensibility to react to perceived conflict has shifted to a blasé urban eavesdropping-as-entertainment approach to street conflict. Nonetheless, that day I decided to get up and look out my bedroom window. I see the neighbor, “Lieutenant Duke” (as he refers to himself), taking up a shooting position behind our car parked directly below the window and shouting “c’mon you nigger motherfuckers” at the four black males standing on the street directly in front of our house.

I open the window and shout “get the fuck outta here you asshole. I’m calling the police.” I stay at the window as I hold my phone ready to make the 9-1-1 call. I watch him wrestle with his pants, presume he is stashing his gun, and then he turns back towards his property and disappears behind the trees. To this day, I still struggle with the cosmic question of “Why” I got involved; however, in writing my story I see clearly there were several key answers as to why I didn’t just go with my new urban flow and let it go.

First, we had just purchased a new used car and I wanted to make sure whatever was happening wasn’t going to damage it. Shallow perhaps, but I’d never owned anything so new in all my life and I was already paranoid about parking it on our street. I felt materially compelled to act in this sense. Second, because my kids weren’t home I knew I wouldn’t be putting them in any kind of danger by going outside and intervening.

I had scarcely had any time without them in the last months so there was a certain bravado associated with being child-free that may have also facilitated my rather impulsive willingness to intervene.

Third, I was intellectually interested in people's "willingness to intervene" and had been troubled for years as to why neighbors uniformly reported this specific "old man's" dangerous and offensive behavior to me, but similarly indicated they had never called the police. On this level I was interested in the encounter as "data," as authentic "observant participant" data (Jones 2009). Finally, I identify strongly as a mother and I knew the recipients of this man's threats to be children. True, the boys were teens and although I knew them as not particularly charming or innocent in the romanticized way our culture constructs "children," I believed they were deserving of an advocate in this situation. In this way I felt morally compelled to act. Someone should be willing to intervene in order to "check" (or to put someone in their place) Duke.

I decided that I need to talk to the boys before I call 9-1-1. I need to talk to the boys as a mother, a neighbor and a researcher. I head out in my lounge clothes without even putting shoes on. The boys are talking loudly amongst themselves and deciding which "niggas" to call so they can "fuck him up." I walk right up to them and say, "Please don't do anything. Let me call the police."

"Fuck that! We got this. We gonna throw a brick through his window" says Ricardo, one of only two of the boys that I know from the street. He and "Looney" are neighbors on the block. I don't specifically recognize the other two boys, but I'm used to seeing "Ricky" (as he's often called) and "Looney" hanging out with groups of other young black males.

“Listen, I want to call the police. I want to show this motherfucker that he can’t do this shit. Y’all know I have girls and I don’t want him around doing this shit all summer while we’re trying to play outside.”

One of the boys I don’t recognize is looking at me incredulously as if I just suggested we all eat glass. “This nigga pulled a gun on us...we gonna Fuck. Him. Up.,” he states emphatically, but fairly matter-of-factly.

Looney nods him off in a manner of saying “Hold up. She’s alright.” This is precisely why I came out to talk to them. I know it’s a major violation of the unspoken “code of the street” to call the police (Anderson 1990, 1999). I want them to know it’s not about them. I need them to know I’m not “that kind” of neighbor. They’ve “tested” (McNamara 1996:55-56) me before by smoking blunts 10 yards away from where I was working in my yard. They spend most summer evenings outside talking loudly amongst each other and “play” fighting. I’ve never called the police. They’ve never bothered me, my family, or my property and this summer they finally started speaking to me directly, referring to me as “O.G.” (street slang for “Original Gangster”).²⁸ I knew my “willingness to intervene” had to be tempered with equal parts concern for how this strategy would be interpreted by these youth. I am always both neighbor and researcher (see Spry 2001).

I continue, “Listen, y’all know I’m no fan of the police but I’m sick of hearing this asshole. If you retaliate y’all know you’re gonna go down for it. It’s not worth it.” I can see they are listening to me and I add almost casually, “Besides I’m white. I can call the police.” I’m used to using humor to diffuse situations but I was also appealing to a truth I knew they would understand. The oldest boy laughs and makes reference to an

episode of “Everybody Hates Chris” where the ambulance responds swiftly to a white boy with a headache while the black kid in the ghetto dies of a gunshot wound. We all laugh.

The not so funny truth was the fact of white privilege. I knew I had white privilege. I’d thought about it. I’d read about it. I’d assigned articles to my students in several courses I’d taught. I planned to whip out one of those “blank checks” from my “invisible knapsack” (McIntosh 1988) and make it out to these boys by claiming access to the kind of positive response I could rightfully demand by virtue of being white (see also Anderson 1990:194).

I also wanted to talk to the boys before calling 9-1-1 because I couldn’t have lived with myself if there was a repeat of what happened the last time I called to protect the woman who had ended up arrested herself. I instruct them, “Ok it’s none of my business but if any of you have drugs on you or you don’t want to be here for any reason then take off now because I’m about to make the call.” Looney says he’s heading over to the corner store to get a drink and takes off on his bike. The others stay put. I “knew” I’d be safe as I wasn’t “holding” (street term for possessing drugs or other illegal contraband). In my arrogance I “knew” I’d be safe because I was white. Intellectually, I understood legal cynicism (Kirk and Matsueda 2011; Sampson and Bartusch 1998), but at heart I still trusted that the police would do their job when the facts, as I knew them, clearly warranted their intervention.

I dial 9-1-1- and tell the dispatcher, “A man just threatened to kill some young boys and he was using racial slurs, calling them niggers.” She asks if he had a weapon and I said, “Yes, a gun.” She takes my name and location and says she is sending

officers to the scene. We don't have to wait long as the officers arrive within minutes and I show them where Duke was standing and take them around the tree line to his backyard. I walk back out to the front of my house and wait with my husband and the four boys. Looney had returned with a soda and the other boys were harassing him for not getting them anything. I ask them if they want a drink and I get them one from inside my house. I also grab my camera and get myself an iced tea which I put in the plastic cup I'm still using from the coffee shop.

There are a total of four squad cars, a wagon and at least eight officers by the time I get back outside. An officer asks me to come to the side yard and speak with him. He and his partner ask me about the gun. "What kind of gun was it?" "I don't know. We don't own any guns. I don't even let my kids play with squirt guns," I tell them honestly. "Well, was it big or was it small? Was it blue or was it purple?" asks his partner very sarcastically. I feel patronized and insulted. I immediately sense that my integrity is on the line, that this is not just a fact-finding questioning and that my whiteness is of no value to this white officer while I'm in the company of all black people. I'm suddenly aware that I'm being treated as a race traitor (Segrest 1994). I'm quickly flustered and given the emotional day I've had, I get defensive. "I don't know. It wasn't purple. I know that because that is my favorite color and I would recognize it. Maybe it was silver or brown? And about this big," I motion about a foot long with my hands. "I just don't know. He stuck it in his pants before he walked away. Listen, I really don't know, I just know he threatened to kill these boys and he called them niggers. Isn't that a crime? My husband and I just lost a baby today and I don't need to think about anything happening to our other children because this drunken asshole is pointing weapons at kids." In

hindsight I realize that I may have inadvertently led them to assume that one or more of the boys were my children.

The sole black officer on the scene has walked up during my answer and pulls me aside and asks, “Do you know those boys?” “Yes.” I reply. “How well?” he asks. “Well, I mean I see them every day. They are my neighbors.” He shakes his head in a tsk-tsk manner and says, “Well you better be careful of that one,” and points to Ricardo who is standing closest to us. “He just stole an mp3 player from a kid at school.”

The officer who summoned me returns and says, “We looked around the backyard and garage area and there are no weapons. He doesn’t even own a gun.” “Ok,” I say, “but all of us saw it. Do you still need me?”

They tell me I can go and they will talk to the others. I walk up to the boys and tell them they are about to be asked about the gun. I tell them “I didn’t see it,” and that I told the officers what I thought it looked like.

I know enough about the faultiness of eyewitness testimony (see Loftus 1996) to know that maybe I didn’t “see” the gun, that perhaps I imputed it based on previous reports of his behavior. But I was NOT lying in the sense of making up or fabricating that he had a gun. Moreover, to me it was as much about his racial slurs and threatening of children, as it was about the gun. Admittedly I’m not a lawyer, but like most Americans I’ve watched a lot of crime T.V. I was fairly confident he could be charged with racial intimidation, inciting a panic, disorderly conduct, child endangerment or some other crime. At this point I was still confident that *something* would happen; a ticket would be written, a citation would be issued or an arrest would be made. I was also

confident that as a white person I could expect to be treated with respect and believed when I made an official report to any authority. I am of course not saying that black folks don't *deserve* this same treatment but instead that I already knew they could not *expect* it (McIntosh 1988; Venkatesh 2008).

My husband is talking video games with the boys and so I head across the street to snap photos of the scene. As part of my ongoing data collection, I have routinely taken pictures of police presence anytime the neighborhood is "all lit up," which is street talk for lots of cops on the scene. I always stand at a distance, among other onlookers when possible and I never interfere in the official business of the police. I can document at least four other instances in the preceding twelve months where I've photographed police in this part of the neighborhood. I didn't have any expectation that this situation would be any different with the exception that I already knew why the police were there. Neighbors from across the street are now outside watching the scene. All but one is black. A black female neighbor I know only casually comes up to where I am photographing and asks what's going on. She is standing beside me when I notice a new officer on the scene approaching me. "What are you doing?" he asks harshly. "Taking pictures" I reply matter-of-factly. "Of what?" he demands. "Of you," I say snapping his photo. "I know my rights and I'm making a file so that if you all don't arrest this guy today and he kills one of my kids I'll be able to sue the shit of you. Well not you 'cause you don't make any money, but the City." Admittedly this was not a well-thought out response and in hindsight pretty well secured a negative outcome vis-à-vis my goals. I would learn much later that this was the Sergeant coming to "clear the scene." Perhaps if

I had been more deferential, I could have expected a different outcome. Of course I'll never know and as a police insider told me later, "his behavior and decisions should not have been dependent on your demeanor. He should have identified himself as the Sergeant at that time...and his concern over your camera should be limited to whether there was evidence on it or not."

Act II, Scene 2: Making the Scene

I'm telling the female neighbor the story of a local police officer under review for illegally confiscating a camera from a black woman who was filming an arrest in another neighborhood. The officer confiscated her camera and threw her in jail and the local paper had recently carried the story of her civil rights lawsuit having been filed. "These motherfuckers think they can do whatever they want," I told her as I saw that all the officers were leaving. As they walked past us I say, "So? Um, can you let us know what's going on?" The officer in the front says, "You'll have to ask the Sergeant," motioning to *that* officer, the one who had just confronted me about my camera. He is heading right for me with his officers lined up behind him. My heart is racing.

"Well?" I question him.

"Well what?" he asks like we're ten-year-olds.

"Did you arrest him?"

"No ma'am."

"Why not?"

"Too many conflicting stories" he answers in a tone of voice that rises slightly and then plummets in a way that feels like a punch in the throat.

This was it for me. I know all about postmodern theories of multiple truths but I also knew I shared a “story” with the boys that was being dismissed outright.

“That’s fucking bullshit. I want the report number. I’m telling you that asshole is going to kill someone. I got kids to protect. This is fucking bullshit. All seven of us have the same story.”

“Ma’am I’m gonna need you to calm down” he says and I don’t even remember hearing him.

“I know how to get a copy of the fucking report and I’m gonna put it in my file with the pictures of you and make sure everyone knows you didn’t do a fucking thing.”

“Ma’am I need you to stop swearing.”

“Fuck that. I’m not the one doing anything wrong here. This is total fucking bullshit.”

“You need to stop.”

“Or what?”

“Or I’ll have to arrest you,” he says with a smile on his face.

“Oh go ahead and take me in,” I say as I saw this kind of glimmer light up his eyes.

I recognized that look of impending eruption, of rage that tells of imminent attack. I’d been on the receiving end of that before. More than a few times actually. I might even argue that my personal experiences, my research training in observational methods and my study of the academic literature on interpersonal violence damn near makes me an “expert” in this area.

It happened in a matter of nano-seconds. I took a step back the instant he lunged forward while whipping his handcuffs out from the leather case fastened to the right side of his belt. He missed me with his swiping left hand which threw his balance off a hair as

the momentum took on more force than he'd expected. This momentary bobble triggered his rage and he full-body tackled me. Again, I'm talking nano-seconds.

I am now on the ground with the wind knocked out of me and my hands tightly cuffed behind me. I can feel a knee in my back and an open hand holding my head down. I can see my glasses, lenses down, lying two feet away and less than three inches from the boot of another officer. It was some moments before the immediate physical force of an officer on top of me was over. Time was still being experienced in a deliberate way where I was hyper-aware of my experience. I remember feeling as if I was swollen with the profound sadness of anger interrupted by captivity. I said only, "Please get my glasses. Please. Get my glasses."

It was several more minutes before an officer orchestrated the awkward maneuvering required to bring me to my feet. My bare feet. I saw a fourth officer with his right hand on my husband's chest and his left on the holstered gun on his hip. I was immediately grateful that my husband is a peaceful man. Even that he is a very slow-moving man. I *knew* that had it been otherwise, we could have had an "officer-involved shooting" on our hands. I could have been making my way to jail in a "wagon" while my husband was loaded into a "bus".²⁹

I had no idea what I was being charged with. I had not been read my rights. This wasn't at all like on T.V. I was loaded into the back of the paddy wagon, the door was shut and I sat in that dark, foul-smelling, confined space channeling my inner yogi by focusing on my breath. I could not see, but I could smell cigarette smoke filtering in from the front seat. I heard the voice of the lone black officer from the scene say "Now why'd you have to go and do that?" I refuse to say anything because I already know all I

“did” was not act like a proper (white) woman (Cashmore and McLaughlin 1991; Schur 1984; Segrest 1994).

The sergeant came to the back of the paddy wagon to tell me he was “sorry [he] had to do that” and asked me while nodding his head slowly in the affirmative, “You *do* understand why I had to do that, right?” The thing is, I felt that I *did* know why he *had* to do it. My truth is that he did it because I wasn’t acting like a proper white woman. I wasn’t deferential to his authority, especially as it was on display for the “ghetto youth” for whom I had tried to intervene. I wasn’t taking the “right” side in a racially charged incident. It really had nothing to do with “the Law.” It had to do with police discretion and his monopoly over the right the use force (Root, Ferrell and Palacios 2013; Weber 1946).

I refused to speak with a Lieutenant sent to the scene to investigate the “use of force.” I knew it was in my best interest to remain silent until I spoke with a lawyer. I was taken to the county jail where I was “booked” and eventually released on bail. My neighbor later confronted me with why she didn’t get my glasses that day: “What they did to you was bullshit. But girl, I ain’t got no man to bail me out.”

I relied on my white privilege to negotiate the fall out (see also Anderson 1990:195-196). I was able to contact a lawyer, a personal friend who agreed to represent me at a significantly reduced rate. Activating this social capital significantly streamlined my experience with the bureaucracy which is the criminal justice system. I eventually took a plea bargain, paid a fine and completed 40 hours of community service.

Act III: In the Meantime

I've spent a lot of time thinking and talking about that one day. I've talked to my husband, my lawyer, my parents, my siblings, my colleagues, two therapists and several of my key informants. In reflecting deeply on that one day in the field I can make most sense of my behavior by invoking (and admitting) my own desire (or need) to display "juice" (Anderson 1999:73) in the face of the utter outrage at having been disrespected vis-à-vis my own self-identity. I knew myself to be a generally respected and respectful, educated white woman-mother. In the face of the officers' collective failure to confirm this identity and treat me accordingly (see Anderson 1990:194), I acted out of my own boiled-over rage at the felt reality of the injustices I had previously only read or heard about (see also Root et al. 2013). Unlike the black males in Anderson's study (1990:190-206), I hadn't been prepared to be discounted as a "nonperson" (ibid:193). I only half-jokingly also attribute the severity of my response to having been reading both bell hooks' (1995) *killing rage: Ending Racism* and Tim Wise's (2008b) *Speaking Treason Fluently: Anti-Racist Reflections from an Angry White Male*. The result was a kind of spontaneous, outrageous combustion that I'm neither proud of nor entirely ashamed of.

I spent the better part of the next year and a half battling post-traumatic stress disorder and depression which zaps me of my ability to write. My dissertation is sidelined as I struggle to maintain balance in my daily life. My family endures repeated episodes where Duke engages in drunken outbursts of singing and taunting neighbors with racial slurs. We don't dare call the police again. My seven-year old daughter begins to fear "the big bad bowl of meanness" as she refers to Duke. I no longer have any faith in the police as arbitrators of neighborhood peace. I have officially adopted what is

widely referred to as “legal cynicism” in the criminological literature (Kirk and Matsuda 2011; Sampson and Bartusch 1998).

Act IV: A New Scene

My second daughter is one. She is cleared of her medically fragile status and she is beginning to eat solid foods, somewhat reducing the labor/burden of around the clock nursing. I discover I have another year left to finish the Ph.D. and I begin to revisit the process of writing. I'm struggling with where to pick up as I've been away from the data for over a year now. I don't know which draft or set of memos to start working on again. I make a few attempts, but mercifully July 4th weekend arrives and I'm forced to put it all aside for a few days to meet family commitments.

It's been over four years, a marriage, two new cats and another baby since I first proposed this research to my dissertation committee. Things have changed; and yet, somehow, things are still the same.

There's a strange synchronicity to this sweltering summer evening. My husband and I have just retreated upstairs to seek refuge in the only air-conditioned space in the house, our bedroom. It's just over two years since we had made the same retreat so that I could rest during what would be a failed pregnancy. Tonight we share the space with our youngest daughter. We are both celebrating her “adjusted” one year birthday and simultaneously commiserating that she isn't old enough to spend the night at her grandparents. We have brought our dinner upstairs to escape the heat and take advantage

of the older girls' absence so as not to be caught violating a house rule: no eating in bedrooms.

BOOM!! (echo) boom!

"It's that asshole shooting his gun," I say.

"It's fireworks," says my husband unfazed.

"I'm telling you it's him. I've been hearing it for the last two nights."

"Exactly," he says dismissively having repeatedly experienced the predictable barrage of fireworks in the weeks surrounding the 4th of July. "Besides, it's coming from down there," he tells me motioning in the opposite direction of my prediction.

BOOM!! BOOM!! (echo) boom! boom!

"That's definitely gunshots." I can see that the possibility is clearer in his mind with the undeniable closeness of the sounds this time. "I'm telling you, it's him. Please, please tell me you'll call the police. Just use the non-emergency number if you want. Please?" I'm equal portions begging and demanding in the way only a wife can do. I'm not at all scared or threatened by the possibility of violence, which is both a symptom and a consequence of urban living. I'm not sure what I "am," but I know my heart is beginning to race and my jaw is tightening.

My husband leaves the room and I hear one last "BOOM" (echo) boom. I don't even get up to look out the window but I do consider calling the police to report shots fired in the area. I decide it's not worth it and realize that I am mostly feeling vindictive at this moment. There I said it. The truth is, I'm not motivated to intervene in any grand effort to maintain the safety of my family and neighbors. I'm motivated to have him thrown in jail, to finally get him where I couldn't get him before.

My phone rings just as I might have felt a bit guilty having identified the source of my desire to intervene. “That crazy bastard was butt-naked in his back yard shooting off a rifle,” says my husband. “No fucking way! I told you,” I reply at least a bit smugly. “Please tell me you called the cops?” I ask.

“Yeah.” I don’t realize he’s hung up the phone until I hear the beep of a text message:

“The po-po just rolled up like mo-fos”

I jump out of bed and rush to that side window where I’d seen Duke with his gun two years ago. I see my husband and Randy, a 60-something year-old, white male neighbor, on the edge of the block while four officers with guns drawn move in to approach Duke’s residence. I take note that Randy looks a bit crazed with no shirt and no shoes on, his scrawny arms framing his hairy beer belly in an odd juxtaposition of features. I realize it’s not only the first time in over five years that I’ve ever seen him without shirt and shoes, but also that he has never once stood out on the block during any previous incident with Duke or otherwise. He leaves early in the mornings to build fences all day and returns before dinner to drink Pabst Blue Ribbon beers all night. I grab the baby and head downstairs without weighing the potential danger of the situation.

It’s Randy’s wife, Robbie, who says “Don’t you bring that baby out here” as I step onto our screened-in porch. It’s like being hit with a stupid-stick as my Nana used to say. What was I thinking? Still, I’m so damned curious I shout for my husband to come over to the porch. “Did they get him?” “Yeah. They just put him in the back of the car now” he replies. “Ok. I’m coming out then. I want to see that asshole in the car. Can you take the baby? I need to take pictures of this shit.” I hand over the baby and make

my way to nearly the exact spot where I was taking pictures two years ago. I survey the scene. The police have used three squad cars to close the main road in the 100 yards in front of Duke's house. Damn. Neighbors are beginning to pour out of their houses as is fairly typical when the place is "all lit up" like this. I can see seven officers gathered in a circle in front of his house. An additional officer exits the house carrying a plain white sheet. He heads to a squad car parked on the road and I realize then that Duke was probably naked still. I start snapping photos with my phone. Oh the satisfaction.

My private moment of joy is interrupted by anger when I recognize the Sergeant that brutalized me among the gathered officers. I look for my husband and find that he and the baby are standing with Randy a mere five yards behind me. "That asshole Sgt. Richards is over there. Do you see him?" Tony shifts his position to get a better look. I can see his face change when he recognizes him too. "Good thing he arrested the right person this time! I totally want to go tell him I knew Duke had guns. They better check his warrants this time! And they better search his house for more weapons." I am so mad now I am literally shaking. "And I hope he does try to say something about my camera this time!"

"Jodi." I hear my husband as if he's at the end of a tunnel. I'm not fully present in my body. "Jodi. You need to calm down. I know it's hard but just go back inside if you need to." He knows better than to try to order my stubborn-ass to do anything and if I were present enough to listen closely I would have heard the desperation in his voice.

I consider his plea momentarily until I spy the paddy-wagon pulling up. "Dude," I tell my husband, "I can't miss this shit!" Two officers are holding the sheet up as they help Duke out of the backseat of the cruiser. I continue taking photos. I am almost giddy

at the thought of them marching Duke, naked, up to the wagon to haul him away. Just then, Sergeant Richards breaks from the group of officers and walks straight towards me. Again, my joy is dispelled just as quickly as it arose.

My Nana's voice in my head: "God has funny ways of letting you know when you're wrong honey". Sigh.

I stand my ground with my phone still positioned to take photographs. I'm expecting a confrontation when I realize he's walking to open the side door of the paddy wagon. I can see what seems like a flash of recognition and a hint of surprise as he looks directly at me. "Hi," he says, quickly looking away.

"Good thing you are arresting the right person this time!" I say as I mumble "motherfucker" under my breath and find myself almost running into my husband who tells me, "Go inside." He reaches out to squeeze my hand as only someone who went through this by my side could. "I can't," I tell him shaking now and completely "triggered out" (as my therapist would refer to these moments of dissociative anxiety). I continue to hold my husband's hand as I snap pictures of the officers loading Duke into the paddy wagon. He is handcuffed and wrapped loosely in a sheet while he threatens to "fuck all you motherfuckers up!" He continues to threaten the officers as they politely tell him that they're trying to help him and that "no one wants a piece" of him.

An officer I've never seen in the neighborhood before approaches the growing group of us standing at the end of the road and says to no one in particular in the crowd of

about fifteen, “We’ve recovered the weapon. Thank you to whoever called.” He walks away quickly without questioning anyone further. I can almost not contain myself. I feel like I’m going to explode.

“Thank you?!” To say the least. I mean we did just avert what could have been a potential catastrophe? Isn’t that all we asked for last time, to be treated like concerned citizens who did the right thing?

“To whoever called?!?” Are you kidding me? It was my husband who called. This fine, upstanding, employed, married black father with no criminal record who has been repeatedly treated like a nigger by your “brothers in blue.” That’s who called. Yeah. That’s. Who. Called.

I’ve had enough déjà-vu and spontaneous data collection for one night so I grab the baby and head inside to type up some field notes. I wonder when life will cease being research.

Act IV: Reflecting on the Scene, Again.

Days out from the episode I recognize the officer should be commended for even bothering to thank the people. These are the kinds of small, simple actions that can build relationships with residents. They certainly work against the kind of hierarchical, antagonistic police-citizen relations that bolster “no-snitching” codes (Kefalas, Carr, and Clampet-Lundquist 2011; Morris 2010). Moreover, the officer’s generic “whoever called” approach turned out to be protective in nature, even if he didn’t intend it to be. We weren’t identified as the “kind of people” who called the police, who violate the local code of conduct to “mind your own business.” The truth is we don’t call the police. Our experiences in this part of the neighborhood over the last five years have been enough to

convince us both that it isn't an effective or safe strategy for maintaining safety and order. The thing is, I've been to enough neighborhood organization meetings to know that just a few streets over, in the more gentrified area of the neighborhood, my husband would be commended for looking out for others. He'd be the local hero for the day. There would be an e-mail blast letting others know what a good neighbor he'd been. Someone would throw a spontaneous backyard cookout in his honor. I know my husband enough to know that he could use that right now, the positive recognition and the cookout. And I know enough about the state of affairs in our country today to know that his experiences of being "niggered" by the police are mild compared to that of many black males.

My Nana again, "Another instance of 'there but for the Grace of God go I' honey."

Today as I head to the coffee shop to put the finishing touches on this article I see Duke. He stares me down from his front yard as I wait at the stop sign for a break in the cross traffic. It's a dark and heavy morning, literally and metaphorically. Last night's rains caused flash flooding in much of the surrounding area and this morning's Duke sighting is causing flash flooding of my emotions. I am at least as sad as I am mad. Intellectually I knew that his charges would not lead to him being locked up for any length of time but I also know things on an intuitive level that are far more troubling. I know that most spree killings are committed by men like Duke: white, mentally ill with a history of impulsive behavior (Collier 1998; Walsh and Ellis 2007). I know in my bones that he is far more of a danger to society than the mass of individuals serving long-term

prison sentences for non-violent offenses. I know that my family needs to move in order to decrease our odds of further victimization from this criminal. I know that we cannot count on the police or other formal means of social control to protect ourselves. And worst of all, I know the pain and outrage experienced by the scores of black folks who have already experienced blatant discrimination in the criminal justice system.

I know there is research out there that supports the claims I have thrown out above. I defy academic standards which would require me to meticulously support these statements by reviewing this literature³⁰ (for those interested see especially Alexander 2012 and Reiman 2007). I offer instead a counter-hegemonic academic maneuver by turning to autoethnography to present my argument. This is a direct contribution to what Mitra (2010) calls “small s scholarship” where the objective is “to understand with, not of, the other, using experience, memory, emotion and performance to redefine the research objective” (2010:11). I begin to embrace the idea that my strong reflexivity and nonconventional writing style can be the strengths of my contribution. I choose to eschew tradition in favor of authenticity and I draw on a growing genre of scholars in both the autoethnographic and feminist autobiographical tradition to support my position(ality) (Denzin 1989, 1997, 2003; Ellis 1991; Ellis and Bochner 2000; Jones, Adams, and Ellis 2013; Richardson 2005a, 2005b, 2007; Ronai 1995).

Concluding Remarks

In a recent special issue of *The Sociological Quarterly* devoted to issues of the reflexive turn in ethnography, guest editor Sudhir Venkatesh (2013) offers insightful commentary on what he refers to as “first-person ethnography.” He acknowledges that

there are many styles of incorporating the “I” into ethnographic texts and he offers a strong position on the promise of this approach:

The use of first person is more than a cute convention or a self-deprecating call for attention. It is more than just an assertion of fieldworker chutzpah or blind ignorance of a world-out-there. At its core, scholars are turning to the self in order to discover not only truths about their own experience but about the world out there. It is as positivist in spirit as the reformulation of survey questions to increase reliability and validity. In other words, the use of first-person ethnography remains at the heart of the empiricist commitments that characterize mainstream sociology.

And yet, there is very little autoethnographic writing making its way into criminology scholarship (see Root et al. 2013 for an exception; see also Ferrell 1997, 2012).

“Never compromise yourself because you’re all you got.” Janis Joplin

It is probably fair to risk the assumption that some readers may be at a loss as to how to digest this research. Some may even question if it’s “real” research or just a self-indulgent story (Frentz 2014; Mykhalovskiy 1996; Root et al. 2013). The answer hinges on “the epistemological and ontological centrality of the researcher to the research process” (Humphreys 2005:841; Spry 2001). In prioritizing the Self-as-researcher, Muncey (2010:2) advises “to consider what particular kind of filter you are employing to separate your own experience from what you are studying.” She also suggests that it is “healthier to acknowledge the link and purposely build it into your work, or even more interestingly, make yourself the focus of the study” (ibid:2). This is not an easy task; instead, it is a challenge requiring one to dig deep into the personal and vulnerable aspects of both the self and the writing process (Martinez 2014).

I hear not my beloved Nana's voice but the voice of a faculty member who epitomizes the hegemonic tradition of positivist-empiricist training and academic socialization: "So what? I mean who cares? Why should I care about your research?"

I will leave these questions up to the reader to answer for themselves. I am satisfied that my work follows in the tradition of autoethnographic inquiries which are

...designed to be unruly, dangerous, vulnerable, rebellious, and creative...Autoethnography shows struggle, passion, embodied life, and the collaborative creation of sense-making...Autoethnography wants the reader to care, to feel, to empathize, and to do something, to act. It needs the researcher to be vulnerable and intimate" (Ellis and Bochner 2006:433).

My experiences as relayed in this article may not be significant in their departure from the experiences of police brutality and consequent legal cynicism in urban areas across The United States. My research is certainly not significant in the more traditional sense that I do not exceed any statistical thresholds. However, I would point the inquiring reader to a potential set of criteria for evaluating this and other autoethnographies:

It needs to make a substantive contribution to an understanding of social life; have aesthetic merit; demonstrate an author's reflexivity and accountability; have an impact on the reader...Copious solid detail; a temporal structure revolving between past and present; emotional integrity of the author, reflecting deeply on her/his own actions...and a reader moved by the story (Ettorre 2010:297-298).

The experience I report here is an example of what Ferrell (1997) refers to as "criminological *verstehen*," or empathetic understanding of criminality and the conditions that lead to its accomplishment. I hope this work may be significant in evoking a response from the reader that gives them an incentive to question their social world. In this sense, *I* become insignificant (see also Parry 2013).

In lieu of significant p-values, I will close by sharing an exchange with Dwayne, one my key informants, who came to see me the morning after my arrest:

“Gurrl,” he says shaking his head back and forth, corners of his mouth fixed somewhere between frowning and pursing his lips, “You couldn’t *eeeven* make this shit up. Guess you’ve gotten your ‘Nigga, wake up’ call though.”

“Yeah. I guess so,” I say not being able to stop the tears from starting. I feel vulnerable and outraged at the same time. This is such a painful juxtaposition of feelings for me. And yet in the presence of Dwayne, I feel almost like I don’t have any right to my feelings. I know that ultimately my experience is largely the outcome of my poor choice of rhetorical strategies and not my skin color. I know “taking one for the team” as Dwayne later says, is not the same as *being* on the team. I know I am not living out the same legacy of historical oppression as Dwayne. I know being married to a black man and having bi-racial children “others” me, yet I can still count on my white privilege in most areas of my life, including that I was able to mobilize social and economic capital in order to avoid spending the night in jail. My husband had the phone number of my lawyer friends, he could secure the money to post my bail, he had a vehicle to drive downtown to pay the bail and he could pick me up and take the next day off his job to be with me. I don’t feel entitled to be crying in front of Dwayne, but I can’t stop. I just keep lighting cigarettes. They make me feel safe.

Dwayne looks at me hard, like he’s trying to see into my soul. “You know what girl?”

“What?” I say drawling deeply on my Winston Light.

“I think you got you a “Wake Up Nigger!’ call.”

“Feel me?” Dwayne asks.

“Yeah,” I say, knowing only that I *know* I now fully grasp why some folks are not “willing” to intervene in neighborhood problems, why some refuse to cooperate with the police and why some have more fear of the police than of any real or potential crime in their neighborhood. It’s not a comfortable realization. Truth is, I *feel* him so much it is unsettling.

I ask him later about what he told me that day regarding getting a wake-up call. He explains that a “Nigga, wake up.” call is when you realize “you be treated like all the Niggas ‘round here no matter what you do.” He tells me that most black folks, especially “mens” keep to themselves in situations where authorities are involved especially because history tells them that prejudice and discrimination are likely to prevail in most circumstances. He invokes some details of the Mumia Abu Jamal case to which I’m not familiar enough with to get the reference in whole but instead put a question mark by it in my field notes. Dwayne continued to explain that a “Wake Up Nigger!” call is when “you do really *over-stand* the Just-US system” (Field notes, July 18th, 2010). His ensuing explanation suggests that it is when a person becomes politicized as a result of systematic injustices perpetrated in and around them.

Dwayne became a rock for me during this painful time. He came to check on me daily for weeks following my arrest. I’d smoke cigarettes while he listened when I

wanted to talk and he'd talk when I wanted to listen. He'd share stories of black history, local politics, his battle with mental illness and his desire to return to school to get his doctorate. It was from Dwayne that I learned that Malcolm X reportedly asked "What do you call a black man who earns his Ph.D.?" "The answer," he told me, "a nigger."

Dwayne had more than an academic understanding of privilege and oppression. His one constant was that he would always come around to insisting I "put this story in the book."

This one's for you Dwayne.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Informal social control is about what residents do to maintain safety and order in their neighborhood. Research establishes that neighborhood structural features differentially impact residents' ability to exercise informal social control (Bursik and Webb 1982; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003; Sampson 1999, 2012). This emphasis on the role of structural features of neighborhoods has dominated mainstream criminological research over the last several decades. Recent calls to extend our understanding of informal social control urge researchers to engage more directly with the ecological and socio-cultural features of neighborhood context (Nielson et al. 2005; Sampson 2012; Sampson and Raudenbush 2004; St. Jean 2007; Warner and Rountree 1997). The three papers in this dissertation report findings which seek to contribute to this body of research by identifying local factors impacting the production and operation of informal social control. These include social differentiation and social class or "life-style" preferences and/or habits (Pattillo 2003; Weber 1946).

I presented data on "informal social control as an active living process" (Carr 2005:11) in order to provide an extended theoretical picture of how local residents actually "do" informal social control. My research revealed that the lived reality of "collective self-regulation" (Janowitz 1975:82) is certainly messier than traditional survey measures of "shared expectations for social control" and "social cohesion/trust"

might suggest (Sampson et al 1997). I applied “an autoethnographic sensibility to ethnographic research” (Ferrell 2012:221) to present an analysis that highlighted “the *social* meanings of trust, solidarity, the willingness to intervene, and the notion of neighborhood safety as a public good” (emphasis added, St. Jean 2007:50) including how these are connected to processes of social differentiation in the gentrifying neighborhood context. Methodologically and epistemologically, this was a shift inspired by my experiences in the field.

Fundamentally, I was deeply interested in unpacking the theoretical nuances of informal social control and collective efficacy. I learned through the process of my research that it was also necessary and informative to also unpack *myself*: as a researcher, as a resident, as a neighbor, as a mother, as a partner. This emerged most forcefully in what became the “climax” of my story in the field (as presented in Chapter IV); however, I also knew this wasn’t just about me, even the intensely personal parts. Ferrell (2012:218) reminds us, “If sociology teaches us anything, it is surely this—that to explore ourselves is to explore others.” I invite the reader to challenge, if necessary, her or his taken-for-granted notions of what constitutes legitimate knowledge (see O’Brien 2009) as I conclude this dissertation by weaving together elements of narrative and more formal academic writing.

It’s been five and half years since I began my dissertation field research in Hilltop Circle. Much has changed and yet much has also stayed the same. The duplex where I lived when I first began this project is now condemned and has been scheduled for demolition by the City. Peering in through the large front window, I can see the

hardwood mantel has been ripped from the fireplace and removed along with the copper pipes running to the bathroom above. The yard is overgrown with an unruly grapevine once meticulously trained to cover only the fence. The side door is boarded up and abandoned tires have been dumped in the driveway.

This once charming house where I made my home is nothing more than a public eyesore. Few local residents are around to remember Hildegard, the German immigrant who bought the house in the late 1980s and raised her two sons here as a single-mother. Her pride and joy was the garden where she'd skillfully planted a perennial garden that bloomed from May through October. She had nurtured a set of currant bushes which provided tart red treats throughout the summer. She was forced to move from the property after a health crisis left her unable to navigate the steep stairs leading to the second floor bedrooms. I was the first tenant to occupy her side of the house after this transition.

It was an old home, built in 1918, with many quirks and lots of problems including a family of squirrels that lived in the walls. She maintained long-term relationships with local, family owned businesses who knew Hildegard would only pay to have it fixed if it really, really needed fixing. She was well-known as a bit of crank and had long-standing disagreements with both of the adjoining neighbors.

She was the kind of landlady that made you deliver your rent in person so she could catch up and check in with you over a glass of Kirschwasser. I often dreaded, but always ended up appreciating these meetings. She took a personal interest in me as a single-mother and had started to talk with me about renting-to-own the house.

Hildegard died suddenly just as I began this research. Her son, an executive in New York City, inherited the property and despite having spent his youth in the home, neglected to care for the property. I was compelled to move when rats began to make their way into my kitchen through a long-neglected hole in the foundation. It was a painful good-bye as we had lovingly painted rooms, cultivated the garden, and buried two cats under the weeping Hemlock tree. My daughter had learned to use the “potty” here, to sleep in her “big girl bed” and had built a village of fairy houses in the back yard. It is still hard for me to reconcile the wreckage left behind.

This is not a romanticized narrative of an imagined past. A former neighbor tells me the trees have begun to grow into the home and that “crackheads” are constantly breaking in, maybe even living there. This is a narrative of one house in a neighborhood in transition; a house that was neglected by an absentee landlord to the point that it is literally falling down. I can only guess that the repair and rehabilitation costs far exceed the potential income for an investor.

This is also an invisible narrative except for being told here. The prevailing narrative circulating among the current residents, my old neighbors, is that “this is what happens when you rent to the wrong kind of people” (Field notes, August 2013). They offer colorful stories about the “idiots” and “assholes” that lived there after we moved out. When I remind them that the landlady’s son inherited the property and that his failure to make repairs made the house undesirable, even uninhabitable, they switch to reminiscing about the “good old times” and encourage me to look into such-and-such

property that is up for sale. “We” need more “good people” in the neighborhood they tell me.

Apparent in these competing narratives is a persistent other-ing that shapes tales of neighborhood problems beyond the personal experiences reported herein. I am suggesting that these kinds of rich details about neighborhood context are ripe with insights for furthering theory, including theories of informal social control and collective efficacy. In this project these insights included social-interactional processes such as social differentiation and selective application of normative standards . Ethnographic research isn’t suited for “testing” theory (Sampson and Groves 1989) and therefore I offer no conclusions about the virility of competing claims. Instead, I emphasize the promise of (auto)ethnographic accounts for generating insights to expand theoretical understandings and infuse our research with “heart” (O’Brien 2009:20). Moreover, the accessibility of ethnographic research’s presentation can bring the reader into “critical engagement with the vulnerability, tension, and conflict inherent in our work” (ibid). Ironically, it is this very feature of (auto)ethnography that makes some social scientists uncomfortable and skeptical of knowledge produced (Coffey 1999; Ferrell 2012; Richardson and St. Pierre 2005). I do not seek to resolve this tension but instead, I have attempted to craft a body of scholarship that reveals, illustrates and engages the possibilities for theory-building in criminology and beyond.

Focusing on what people say and do, this dissertation introduced new insights to further our understanding of the production, enactment and consequences of informal

social control. These included the role of social differentiation and the selective application of normative standards for neighborhood behavior as they related to the identification of “problems.” My approach frames informal social control as emerging at least in part out of the struggle to define and patrol neighborhood and social boundaries. It does so by integrating extant theory with constructs from outside the mainstream of criminology to provide a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between individuals and communities.

My analyses have sought to draw out the agentic aspects of informal social control and highlight the role of power in the production, articulation and distribution of control practices in the neighborhood. I introduced the construct *selective efficacy* to underscore the dynamic nature of the interplay between the construction of neighborhood problems and processes of social differentiation. Finally, I integrated aspects of Bourdieu’s theory of social practice with constructs from scholarship on informal social control to suggest directions for theoretical elaboration and innovation. The developing constructivist grounded theory treats informal social control as simultaneously creating and reflecting neighborhood socio-cultural dynamics.

I began struggling with how to make sense of my positionality in the field as my experiences of “doing ethnography and being the ethnographer” (Mitra 2010:2) increasingly ran together. By the time I moved to my current house in 2009, something about the research was beginning to change me (see also Lyng 1998 on transformation of self through fieldwork). A story in a reader on field methods captures the essence of

what was happening. Kornblum (1996:2-3) gives this account of author Tom Wolfe and the Merry Pranksters:

...[Ken] Kesey himself was the subject of a quasi-ethnographic study: He and his circle of hippie friends, known as the Merry Pranksters, were described by Tom Wolfe in *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*. In the 1960s Wolfe was just beginning his career as an ethnographic journalist, yet he was already renowned for his steadfast uninvolvedness in the lives of his subjects, as well as for his cool white linen suits. One day he was sitting with the Merry Pranksters in a room of Kesey's house while Kesey was painting the ceiling. A glob of yellow paint fell on the observer's immaculate white jacket, and although Wolfe wiped off the paint with studied calmness, he was unable to hide his profound annoyance. "That's how it is, Tom," said Kesey. "If you want to get down in it you've got to get some of it on you."

"Getting some of it on you" is not at all uncommon among ethnographers (see Chapkis 2010; Ferrell 2012; Kornblum 1996; Root et al. 2013; Sterk 1996; Venkatesh 2008, 2013) and how to handle it lies at the heart of the insider/outsider negotiations permeating all field research (Ferrell 1997; Jewkes 2012; Naples 1996; O'Brien 2009). It also comes to bear on how one (re)presents the data (Coffey 1996; Denzin and Lincoln 2000; Mitra 2010). In my case, I chose the path of deep reflexivity and have been committed to "captur[ing] how research writing reaches inward to include the self in the research process" (Coffey 1996:136). The reader will have to judge for themselves whether this is a strength or weakness of my work.

There are several limitations of the current project. First, this study utilizes data from only one neighborhood setting. The results may be idiosyncratic in ways shaped by the local context. For example, while the neighborhood under study is located in an urban area, nearly adjacent to the downtown corridor on one side, it does not contain

entrenched areas of concentrated disadvantage. Moreover, the neighborhood racial composition is limited insofar there is primarily a distinction between “White people” and “Black folks.”³¹ This limits the interpretation of the dynamics of racial/ethnic heterogeneity. Future research might compare across types of gentrifying neighborhoods. For example, it would be valuable to compare racially homogeneous gentrifying neighborhoods with racially diverse gentrifying neighborhoods. Moreover, examining patterns of informal social control in non-gentrifying settings, or even in suburban neighborhoods, would provide useful comparisons.

A second limitation of the current research is the limited observation of individual acts of informal social control. It is difficult to observe instances of intervention in real time. Although I do report on my own experiences and the surveillance behaviors of some other residents, by and large, my direct observation of instances of informal social control came through observations at and with the neighborhood organization. Theories of informal social control in the extant literature have been developed largely through analysis of data regarding intention or expectation for intervention instead of direct observation of behavior so there is still a unique contribution in this project. Nonetheless, it would be ideal to analyze a diverse sample of individual behaviors. Future research may explore the possibilities for theoretical elaboration (Vaughn 1992) through comparative case studies of “hero” behavior (e.g., saving people from a burning house).

A third limitation is that I do not incorporate official crime data from the City in the dissertation. I did review publicly available crime maps and aggregate statistics for areas of the city during the course of my data collection. Several obstacles prevented me from straightforwardly and accurately reporting on this publicly available data including:

Hilltop Circle is part of several zip codes, overlaps boundaries with police-identified patrolling zones and is not a geographically distinct reporting unit. Finally, I was primarily interested in what residents do to promote safety and order in their neighborhood. Theoretically this is not dependent on “actual” crime rates. It is the process of identifying and organizing against neighborhood “problems” that is of interest.

Finally, I would be remiss not to address the possibility that my choice of writing format and style are a limitation as evaluated within the traditional model of criminological (and sociological) scholarship. Ethnographic research has increasingly been marked by deeply reflexive accounts that are often presented in alternative formats (i.e., performative, visual, multi-media) and/or written in non-traditional styles (i.e., narrative or literary techniques, evocative rhetorical devices, free-style writing, non-linear texts) (see Coffey 1999; Denzin 1997; Ferrell 2009a; 2012; Jewkes 2012; Mitra 2010; Spry 2001; Venkatesh 2012 for methodological discussions; for examples of non-traditional format and style see Anderson 2011; Ellis and Bochner 2006; Richardson 2007; Root et al. 2013; Venkatesh 2008; Weaver-Hightower 2012). Despite the growing number of researchers adopting innovative writing techniques and shifting the textual formats for (re)presenting their work, skepticism remains regarding the scholarly value of such work (Anderson 2006; Holt 2003). These concerns are rooted in differentially valued modes of representation and legitimation (cf. Denzin and Lincoln 2006; Ellis and Bochner 2006).

A researcher who chooses to depart from discipline-specific normative practices for “doing research” and “reporting findings” must do so with an understanding that it may marginalize her as a scholar and may limit her publication opportunities in

“mainstream” journals (Ferrell 2012; Holt 2003). In terms of “limitations” however, this may be a case of is the glass (or vitae) half-empty or half-full? There are certainly scholars who are optimistic about the future of first-person and/or (auto)ethnography in the field of criminology and beyond (Ferrell 2012; Lyng 1998; O’Brien 2009; Jewkes 2012). Finally, there is the classic feminist dictum, “the personal is political.” This informed my personal (and political and professional) decision to engage with alternative forms of knowledge production in both the format and style of my ethnographic accounts (Mitra 2010; Spry 2001).

The intellectual journey of producing these ethnographic accounts has been as much about the process of analysis and discovery as it has been about wrestling with the confines of language for adequately conveying what I observed in the field (see also Richardson and St. Pierre 2005). I chose to disrupt the expected format of this conclusion to demonstrate and emphasize how I came to embrace the promise of “performative writing” (Mitra 2010:3; see also Spry 2001). While it may demand more engagement on the part of the reader, it is also more authentically representative of the “dialectical mode of doing/being in the research process” (Mitra 2010:3). It expands the capacity of the mode of representation, the text, to mimic the complexity of everyday life while also providing an experience of the way the text is produced.

I would suggest that to the degree we can incorporate such textual diversity into elements of mainstream criminology and sociology, we can more fully realize the potential of the contributions our disciplines have for understanding the social world. In her Presidential Address at the annual meetings of the Pacific Sociological Association in

2008, Jodi O'Brien urged sociologists "to [go] deeper inward as a way to evolve professionally and personally" (2009:8). I feel I have done just that in this dissertation. Moreover, I submit that although my work deviates from standard presentations, I have "wallow[ed] in the messiness of human social life...and this...is the heart of sociology" (ibid:20).

¹ The names of all places and people have been changed to protect anonymity.

² Details of the process of data collection are included in the substantive papers forming the body of the dissertation.

³ Other scholars have offered more in-depth accounts of Bourdieu's social theory. For these discussions I would direct the reader to Lareau 2003:Appendix B; Sallaz and Avisca 2007; Swartz 1997; Webb, Schirato and Danaher 2002.

⁴ The names of all places and people in the text have been changed to pseudonyms.

⁵ I make this case explicit as several of the (upper-)middle class residents I interviewed maintain that the neighborhood is not gentrified (or gentrifying). I have concluded that this is part of their narrative of place that claims their "moral ownership" (Benson and Jackson 2012: 794) of the area. Additionally, I conclude that it also reflects their lack of intimate knowledge of their immediate surroundings perpetuated by a kind of social and classed-based isolation in very specific areas of the neighborhood.

⁶ I found myself on this trolley ride quite by accident one Saturday while attending a downtown festival with my husband and then four year old daughter. An announcement for free trolley rides was too good to pass up so we boarded the faux-historic trolley and were surprised to find ourselves transported back to our neighborhood where the guide urged us to look out the driver-side windows to see an "exciting new renovation of a 1800s historic home." Moments later we turned on to a street with several known drug and prostitution hotspots. It was at this moment that I asked only partially in jest if the guide had anything to say about these houses. He launched into a spontaneous speech about the benefits of "redevelopment" and the city's commitment to continuing its investment in "saving historic homes." This serendipitous event became a hallmark in my research narrative as my husband forever refers to the "gentrification trolley" while making the sound of the neighborhood trolley on *Mr. Rogers Neighborhood*.

⁷ Bourdieu's articulation of habitus allows us to understand how even "(mostly) unconscious" (Wade 2011:225) practices can serve to signal distinction.

⁸ The Cane Corso is a breed of dog known to share many similarities with pit bulls. They are both considered aggressive dog breeds and are often kept for protection.

⁹ I would suggest that the two major contributors to the social segregation of the space include economics and homophobia. First, working-class individuals are less likely to want to or be able to afford the prices for coffee. Second, my data suggest a general disdain for “the gays” among the black working-class population of the neighborhood. This is an openly and proudly gay-owned (and gay-friendly) business.

¹⁰ See Lofland (1998:45-6) for a discussion of the slippage between public and parochial realms as perceived by residents. Dogs can also be “walked” at a dog park but these spaces are generally reserved for allowing dogs to run free from their leashes.

¹¹ This is not to say there are not black middle-class residents of Hilltop Circle, but the black middle-class is concentrated more specifically in another location in the City.

¹² While I have changed the name of all people, organization and events in this paper, I have chosen this pseudonym to reflect the militaristic and surveillance connotation of the original name.

¹³ The research establishing the importance of social ties to the operation of informal social control is not uniform in its conclusions. For example, some research has suggested that an uncritical reliance on the *mere presence* of social networks in a community fails to recognize that such networks can also facilitate criminal behavior (cf. Bellair, 1997; Pattillo, 1998; Reiss, 1986; Kubrin Weitzer, 2003; Anderson, 1999).

¹⁴ I thank Dr. Tiffany Taylor for pointing this out.

¹⁵ This is the term regularly used by my informants and shares some similarities to Anderson’s (1999) “decent” with the exception that most white people are not presumed to inhabit the same socio-cultural universe as the local Blacks. Therefore, the presumption that someone is “alright” means they are tolerable, but an outsider. The distinction between “decent” and “street” assumes more shared socio-cultural space. I (intend to) develop this concept in more detail elsewhere.

¹⁶ Names of places and people have been changed throughout the article to protect confidentiality and help maintain anonymity.

¹⁷ It is not that other scholars refute this point, but their results are limited by the nature of the collective efficacy scale.

¹⁸ Discussion of methods in this paper is limited to a detailed discussion of neighborhood organization meetings. More on methods is available in Chapters I and II. Similarly, additional details about the neighborhood setting are reported in Chapter II.

¹⁹ Exact citations are not provided in the references for City data and newspaper articles because they contain the real names of places in the research. The authenticity of the

sources can be verified by the author upon request. [AUTHOR NOTE: See Pattillo (1998:771) for similar decision]

²⁰ City reports of demographics for Hilltop Circle rely on census data from 2000 which is appropriate for the time period of data collection. I have no reason to believe the demographics of the neighborhood have changed dramatically from these figures. Moreover, I relied on City reports of census data because I had no way to combine census tracts to account for the geographical area represented as defining the boundaries of the neighborhood. The neighborhood contains parts of three zipcodes making zipcode data also difficult to aggregate.

²¹ I say suspected here because as I will discuss later in the article, there is no evidence that the specific instances and woman referenced by residents were prostitution or prostitutes. Additionally, street prostitutes are known to enter and exit the practice, meaning that although prostitute may become a master status. It may not be reliably predictive of all the woman's activities.

²² I was able to substantiate two arrests from this operation in publicly available police reports.

²³ Ronai (1995:395-396) proposes the "layered account" as a way for "ethnographers to break out of conventional writing formats...[and]... expand the types of knowledge they are permitted to convey".

²⁴ I am not suggesting that scholars *believe* in an essentialist notion of crime and disorder, but that the methodological approaches used to operationalize (or failure to operationalize) crime and disorder cannot account for the variability in perceptions (see especially Sampson and Raudenbush 2004 on this point as it related to disorder).

²⁵ Typically, heroin overdoses (or overdoses by another drug) are not announced publicly as such. Obituaries often read simply "died suddenly" or "died unexpectedly". One often hears about the cause of death via social networks. I acknowledge that I was more likely to know about the deaths of people from the music and arts scene due to the depth and breadth of my social networks.

²⁶ I draw on field notes, memos, jottings, photographs, interviews, documents, conversations, memories and chapter drafts from the larger project in constructing this layered account. I use stylistic markers such as asterisks, italics, capitalizations and bolded text "to denote a shift to a different temporal/spatial/attitudinal realm" (Ronai 1995: 397; see also Mitra 2010).

²⁷ I have changed the name of all places and people reported in this paper so as to maintain the anonymity of participants.

²⁸ I did not know what this term meant when Ricky began referring to me as O.G. I asked him one day, "what'd you call me?" He laughed and said "O.G." I asked what it

meant and he shook his head as if he couldn't believe I didn't know. "Original Gangster" he told me "you know, lookin out for the place. Alright." I later spoke with an older informant of mine who indicated that it is a term of respect usually reserved for males who may or may not have been "gangsters" in any sense of the word. He indicated that the key feature of an O.G. is someone older and respected, even trusted, in so far as street youth trust anyone.

²⁹ "Officer-involved shooting" is an official police idiom used both locally and nationally to refer to cases where officers shoot a suspect in the field. "Wagon" is slang for the police van used to transport suspects to jail. "Bus" is police slang for an ambulance.

³⁰ Comprehensive overviews and critical analysis of the criminal justice issues embedded in this discussion can be found in Alexander (2012) and Reiman (2007).

³¹ These are the category labels most used by my informants.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL



NOTICE OF APPROVAL

Date: June 10, 2008

To: Jodi A. Ross
3 Neal Court
Akron, Ohio 44303

From: Sharon McWhorter, IRB Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "SM", written over the name Sharon McWhorter.

Re: IRB Number 20080606
"Gentrification and Neighborhood Social Control"

Thank you for submitting your Exemption Request for the referenced study. Your request was approved on June 10, 2008. The protocol represents minimal risk to subjects and matches the following federal category for exemption:

- Exemption 1** - Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices.
- Exemption 2** - Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior.
- Exemption 3** - Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior not exempt under category 2, but subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office.
- Exemption 4** - Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens.
- Exemption 5** - Research and demonstration projects conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine public programs or benefits.
- Exemption 6** - Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies.

Annual continuation applications are not required for exempt projects. If you make changes to the study's design or procedures that increase the risk to subjects or include activities that do not fall within the approved exemption category, please contact me to discuss whether or not a new application must be submitted. Any such changes or modifications must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

Please retain this letter for your files. If the research is being conducted for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, the student must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation.

Cc: Kathryn Feltey - Advisor
Rosalie Hall - IRB Chair

Approved consent form/s enclosed

Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Akron, OH 44325-2102
330-972-7666 • 330-972-6281 Fax

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APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT



Informed Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a study being conducted by Jodi Ross, a doctoral level student from the College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Sociology, The University of Akron, Akron, OH.

The goal of the project is to understand how neighborhood residents act to maintain safety and order in their local environment. The researcher is interested in the perceptions of residents about safety and order, the history of crime problems and past and current efforts to prevent crime in the neighborhood.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to take part in an interview conducted by Jodi Ross. The interview is expected to last between one and two hours. With your permission the interview will be audio-taped so that the interview may be transcribed verbatim. Audio files of the interview will be destroyed after the transcription is completed.

Participation in the project is completely voluntary. I will accept verbal consent of your willingness to participate. If you agree to participate, you may refuse to answer any questions and may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Your confidentiality will be protected throughout the study. Your name will not be attached to the transcripts of your interview. Audio files of the interview will be destroyed after transcription. You will be assigned an identification number so that I contact you for follow-up information if necessary. A master list of identification numbers will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the Sociology Department. Your name will not appear in any published reports of the data.

There are no anticipated benefits or risks to you as a participant, aside from helping the researcher to better understand the way in which residents act to maintain safety and order in their neighborhood.

If you have questions about the research project, you can call me at 330-972-8244 or my advisor, Dr. Kathy Feltey at 330-972-6877.

This research project has been reviewed and approved by The University of Akron Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. Questions about your rights as a research participant can be directed to Ms. Sharon McWhorter, Associate Director, Research Services, at 330-972-7666 or 1-888-232-8790.

Thank you for your participation!

Department of Sociology
Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences
Akron, OH 44325-1905
330-972-7481 • 330-972-5377 Fax

APPROVED
IRB
Date 6/16/03
The University of Akron

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Pseudonym	Gender	Race	Age	Years in N’hd	“Doing Neighborhood”: Status Characteristics
CeeCee	F	Black	68	27	Renter
Trisha	F	White	22	Born here/22	Renter/Parents own a home where she grew up/N’hd Organization Member
Robert	M	White	Early 40s	7	Homeowner/Landlord/ Business Owner
Lonny	M	Black	39	10	Renter/Couch-surfer
Reginald	M	Black	32	3	Renter/N’hd organization member
Roy	M	Black	40s	8	Renter/Section 8
Jerry	M	Black	60s	Outsider	Former law enforcement/ Current City official
Rick	M	White	Late 30s	2	Homeowner/N’hd Organization core member
Ruby	F	Black	85	Outsider	N’hd school crossing guard for 25 years
Willow	F	White	23	18	Renter/Lived with parents in N’hd prior to having own place
Adelaide	F	White	Mid 50s	12	Home Owner/N’hd Organization core member
Parker*	M	White	Late 20s	Outsider	Landlord/Owns 5 homes in N’hd
Paige*	F	White	Mid 20s	Outsider	Girlfriend of Landlord
Giada	F	White	34	3	Renter/Works in N’hd Coffeeshop
Rick*	M	White	Late 20s	3	Renter
Sandy*	F	White	Late 20s	3	Renter
Judy	F	White	50s	15	Former N’hd resident/Current City employee

Pseudonym	Gender	Race	Age	Years in N'hd	"Doing Neighborhood": Status Characteristics
Cooper*	M	White	30s	4	Home Owner/N'hd Organization core member
Benji*	M	White	30s	4	Home Owner/N'hd Organization core member
Regina	F	Black	30s	On and off 20 years	Renter/Marginally homed
Rodney	M	Black	Mid 50s	Whole life	Renter/Family owns home in N'hd

*Interviewed together as couple

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW OUTLINE

The research design called for open-ended, unstructured interviews. The goal was to elicit information from respondents in an unscripted manner. I began each interview in the same way (noted below) but the subsequent direction of the questioning was unstructured. The following is a list of questions that may have been asked during an interview. I did not use this as an “interview guide” in the traditional sense, but instead I allowed the participant’s narrative to guide the inquiry.

Neighborhood life and culture

All interviews began with the following question

Tell me about how you came to live in this neighborhood.

What is this neighborhood like? How would you describe this neighborhood to another person?

What are the residents of this neighborhood like? Who lives here?

What kinds of things do you like to do in the neighborhood? What does your typical day in the neighborhood look like?

Tell me about your neighbors? Do you know a lot of people on this block? In the neighborhood?

What is the single most important thing about this neighborhood for you?

Tell me about your future plans as far as living here in Hilltop Circle.

Neighborhood Crime and Intervention

What are your thoughts about crime in this neighborhood?

Do you feel safe in your neighborhood?

Is there a crime problem in this neighborhood? Tell me about that?

Have you ever been a victim of crime? How about your neighbors?

Tell me about the things you do to keep yourself and your home safe?

Tell me about a time you called the police to report a crime in this neighborhood?

If you saw someone involved in an altercation would you intervene? How?

If you saw someone painting graffiti would you intervene? How?

If you saw someone you didn't know in the neighborhood how would you respond?

Do you know any police officers that patrol this neighborhood?

Neighborhood Organizations

Sometimes there are organizations serving the interests of those in a neighborhood. Some examples would include housing groups or block watch groups or even groups for joggers. What can you tell me about the kinds of formal organizations in the neighborhood?

How do you know about their work?

What do they do?

Tell me about your involvement (or not)?

Future of Neighborhood

If you were somehow in charge of the neighborhood, what would you change? Why?

What is your vision of Hilltop Circle in ten years? What do you imagine will stay the same? What will change?