Crime, Neighborhood Context and Collective Action

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Community Policing in Chicago

Beat teams of police officers

Beat meetings

Link to city services
Beat Meetings

meet monthly, in a local church, school or community center
attended by officers working in the area

Make announcements and pass out information
Review what has been done about problems discussed at the last meeting
Discuss new problems and what could be done to solve them

Attended by an average of 5 police officers, plus other city and political workers
Last about 80 minutes

Meetings heavily advertised, in print, radio and television
Professional community organizers to support the meetings
Surveys show they were very widely known – 61% in 2003
Trends in Beat Meeting Attendance 1995-2009

279 beats
250 meetings a month
Average beat met 10 times/year
Attendance varies
weather and season
notable local incidents
demography and crime

includes estimates for meetings held but data missing
My expectation: ‘establishment bias’ in turnout and representation

The opportunities created by voluntary programs typically advantage:

- better educated and informed people
- households with more social capital
- households already connected to agencies and institutions
- better-off; home owners; racial majorities; long-term residents
- neighborhoods that are already well organized and politically connected
- neighborhoods where residents do not fear each other
- individuals and neighborhood already favorable toward the police
- neighborhoods where residents do not fear retaliation for attending

They would be most successful where they were least needed.
Ways of Getting Things Done in Chicago

- support the mayor
- collective efficacy
- informal social control
- community mobilization

LOESS smoothed regression lines N=279

Involvement rates (standardized scores)

concentrated poverty (factor score)
Ways of Getting Things Done in Chicago - II

Involvement rates (standardized scores)

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beat meetings
support the mayor
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informal social control
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beat meetings
This Study
Individual and Neighborhood-Level Analysis
Using Surveys

compounded 1993-2003
early samples about 1,700
later samples 2,700-3,200

sampled the entire city
large enough to represent whites, blacks and Hispanics
respondents located in their police beat (N=279)

cover many topics, including awareness and attendance at meetings

for this analysis I merge the 2001 and 2003 surveys; N=5,626
Individual and Neighborhood Factors and Beat Meeting Attendance

**Neighborhood Factors**
- facilitate awareness
  - community cohesion
  - density of organization
- facilitate attendance
  - neighborhood crime
  - neighborhood disorder

**Individual Factors**
- facilitate awareness
  - English speaker
  - home owner; older
  - long-term resident
  - networked with residents
- facilitate attendance
  - no children at home
  - retired from working
  - older; home owner
  - concerned about problems
  - committed to community
  - economic interest

61% aware
- aware of meetings

15% attended
- (24% of aware)
- attend meetings
Crime and Beat Meeting Attendance

- (log) property crime-burglary
  - $r = +.33$

- (log) gun crime rate
  - $r = -.66$

- (log) 911 drug calls
  - $r = +.55$

- (log) personal crime rate
  - $r = +.69$
Work in Progress

Better develop factors influencing awareness of the meetings

Figure out the role of neighborhood factors
(about 4% of awareness and 5% of attendance)

- direct effects on awareness (random intercepts)?
- direct effects on participation ? ; and/or
- individual awareness leads to participation differently in different neighborhoods (random slopes)?

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