

# Illegal Behavior, Neighborhood Context, and Police Reporting by Victims of Violence

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Mark T. Berg<sup>1</sup>, Lee Ann Slocum<sup>2</sup>, and Rolf Loeber<sup>3</sup>

## Abstract

**Objectives.** To assess (1) if robberies and assaults are less likely to be reported when the victim is engaged in crime and if this relationship can be explained by characteristics of the incident, victim, or the victim's neighborhood and (2) if neighborhood context moderates the effects of offending on reporting. **Methods.** The data include 832 victimizations reported in the Pittsburgh Youth Study (PYS). All data are self-reported except neighborhood disadvantage and crime rates, which were measured using census data and police records, respectively. Data are analyzed using random intercept models. **Findings.** Victimization are less likely to be reported when the victim is more involved in crime and this relationship is not fully explained by characteristics of the victim, incident, or the victim's neighborhood. The effect of offending on reporting is stronger for incidents in which the victim resided in a high-crime or disadvantaged neighborhood. **Conclusions.** Victims' offending is an important correlate of reporting; however, the

<sup>1</sup> Department of Criminal Justice, Indiana University-Bloomington, IN, USA

<sup>2</sup> Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Missouri-St. Louis, MO, USA

<sup>3</sup> Department of Psychiatry, School of Medicine, University of Pittsburgh, PA, USA

## Corresponding Author:

Mark T. Berg, 311 Sycamore Hall, Bloomington, IN 47405, USA.

Email: [markberg@indiana.edu](mailto:markberg@indiana.edu)

assumption that criminals are unwilling or unable to use formal social control seems to apply mainly to those who reside in disadvantaged or high-crime neighborhoods. Future research should explore why offenders' willingness to report varies by neighborhood context.

### **Keywords**

victimization, victim reporting, neighborhood context

### **Introduction**

An increasing amount of attention has been directed at understanding the nature of individuals' actions in the aftermath of being victimized. Some victims seek "personal justice" and retaliate against the offender (Topalli, Wright, and Fornango 2002), some avoid those who harmed them altogether, while others seek the assistance of the police. Although public officials have embarked on an effort to encourage victims of crime to take the latter course of action (Renzetti, Edelson, and Bergen 2001), a significant percentage of crimes are never brought to the attention of law enforcement officials. Estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) indicate, for example, that in 2007 approximately 42 percent of violent crimes were not reported to the police (Rand 2008).

Since the 1960s, researchers have sought to understand why a large percentage of victimizations go unreported (e.g., Gottfredson and Hindelang 1979; Skogan 1984), yet limited attention has been paid to whether reporting is influenced by victims' own involvement in crime. There are several reasons to expect that offending will be a salient predictor of reporting. For example, people who are actively involved in illegal activities commonly express an antagonistic view of the law, rely on forms of violent self-help to resolve conflicts or rectify transgressions, and avoid interaction with legal authorities so not to expose their misdeeds (Rosenfeld, Jacobs, and Wright 2003). When one considers the fact that offenders are disproportionately victimized (Lauritsen and Laub 2007), this suggests many crimes go unreported because the victims are involved in unlawful behavior.

Most of what little is known about the negative relationship between offending and police notification has emerged from qualitative studies of active offenders (e.g., Jacobs and Wright 2006). While this research is important, it does not assess if other theoretically relevant factors confound the effect of offending on reporting. More importantly, because this work focuses almost exclusively on serious offenders residing in high-crime, impoverished areas, it is not known whether these findings can be

generalized to other contexts. In fact, there are a number of reasons to expect that the effect of criminal behavior on reporting is context-specific.

The current article explores the relationship between offending and victimization reporting using data from the Pittsburgh Youth Study (PYS). We first assess the extent to which victims' offending predicts whether they contacted the police when robbed or assaulted. We then examine if characteristics of the victims, victimization incidents, or neighborhoods in which victims reside accounts for this relationship. Finally, we evaluate whether the effect of offending on reporting varies as a function of neighborhood conditions.

Examining these issues is important for several reasons. Citizen reporting is the primary mechanism through which crimes become known to law enforcement (Warner 1992:72) and therefore nonreporting will cause official agencies to underestimate crime rates. When certain subgroups of the population are less willing than others to report their victimizations, this may in turn hamper the effective deployment of police resources and bias empirical research that relies on official crime data (Baumer and Lauritsen 2010; Skogan 1976). Moreover, if victims are unwilling to enlist the police to settle their disputes, it may enhance the possibility that they will deploy their own form of informal or personal justice.

## **Offending Reporting by Victims of Crime**

Most research in the United States on victim reporting has been conducted using the National Crime Survey (NCS) and its contemporary the NCVS. Studies consistently have found that incident-specific characteristics are the strongest predictors of reporting, especially the seriousness of the victimization, followed by characteristics of the victim (e.g., Avakame, Fyfe, and McCoy 1999; Baumer and Lauritsen 2010; Gottfredson and Hindelang 1979). While a significant amount of attention has been paid to variation in reporting, Jacobs and Wright (2006:42) note that "the degree to which offenders mobilize formal authorities on any capacity has historically received little criminological attention." Perhaps, the main reason for this omission is that few data sets contain information on victimization, offending, and police notification (Lauritsen and Laub 2007).<sup>1</sup> As a result, much of what we know about this topic is based on interviews with active street offenders. Generally, this work has found that individuals involved in illicit activities are reluctant to report victimization to the police, often because they fear being implicated in a crime (Rosenfeld et al. 2003; Wright and Decker 1997).<sup>2</sup>

## Reexamining the Link between Offending and Reporting

Although qualitative research has provided important information about police reporting among active offenders, this work does not evaluate whether offenders' illicit activities per se make them reluctant to notify the police, or if their apparent reluctance stems from factors commonly associated with offending. Several key correlates of criminal behavior are also likely related to reporting, and these may explain why active offenders are reluctant to enlist police services. For example, offenders often associate with others involved in crime and may be less willing to report their victimizations out of concern that the police will become aware of their associates' illegal activities (Jacobs and Wright 2006; Topalli et al. 2002). Moreover, individuals who engage in criminal behavior are also more likely to have unwanted contact with law enforcement, both as arrestees and suspects (Hindelang, Hirschi, and Weis 1981). Research has found that this experience is negatively related to reporting intentions (Davis and Henderson 2003) and this effect is enhanced if individuals feel that they were treated unfairly (Leiber, Nalla, and Farnworth 1998; Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tyler 2006). Finally, offenders may be reluctant to report victimizations because they hold a "punitive definition of justice" (Jacobs and Wright 2006:30), whereby they prefer to rectify grievances through violent forms of self-help. This discussion implies that existing qualitative research is limited because it has not explored whether factors commonly correlated with criminal behavior account for the relationship between offending and reporting.

A second limitation of prior work stems from its narrow focus on offenders living in disadvantaged and high-crime neighborhoods. The use of homogenous samples may have caused qualitative research to *overstate* the association between criminal behavior and police notification for two reasons: (1) this association may be confounded by neighborhood characteristics or (2) neighborhood context may moderate the offending-reporting association such that it is stronger in disadvantaged, high-crime neighborhoods. We discuss each of these possibilities below.

Within distressed urban neighborhoods, it is quite likely that most residents—not only those involved in criminal behavior—are unlikely to elicit help from the police (Anderson 1999; Goudriaan, Wittebrood, and Nieuwbeerta 2006). The negative relationship between disadvantage and the willingness to report crime is also anticipated by a number of different theoretical perspectives. For example, Black's (1976) theory of law predicts

that in areas of lower socioeconomic status (SES), residents are less likely to use the formal legal system to manage conflicts. According to Black (1976:17-18), wealth designates vertical status in social life, and people with lower vertical status theoretically “have less law.” Neighborhood poverty should affect reporting decisions because living in a poor neighborhood is a signal of having lower vertical status (cf. Baumer 2002:582). Drawing on this work, Cooney (1998:122) conceives of contemporary impoverished urban environments as “stateless.” Here, the police and prosecutors are of higher social status than residents, especially offenders, and as a result, the formal law is rarely invoked to resolve conflict (see also Anderson 1999). Moreover, contemporary social disorganization theory posits that socioeconomic disadvantage disrupts neighborhood cohesion, which ultimately hampers residents’ ability to form effective partnerships with agencies external to the neighborhood (Bursik and Grasmick 1993). In fact, some empirical research has observed a negative relationship between neighborhood poverty and police notification, with particularly low levels of reporting at very high levels of disadvantage (Goudriaan et al. 2006). Other studies have found curvilinear effects, whereby the overall effect of poverty on simple assault reporting is positive, but it becomes negative at very high levels of poverty (Baumer 2002).

Similar to neighborhood disadvantage, local crime rates also influence the nature of neighborhood social life (e.g., Harding 2009) and therefore may confound the relationship between offending and victimization reporting. Where crime is more pervasive, victims may be reluctant to contact the authorities out of concerns about (1) retaliation and (2) bringing unwanted police attention or “heat” to the misdeeds of their neighbors (Jacobs and Wright 2006). Crime rates may also affect the nature of police work and by extension, police-citizen interactions. Klinger (1997), for example, argues that in high-crime communities, police respond to deviance with less vigor, taking fewer reports and making fewer arrests than they would for comparable illegal behavior in lower crime areas (see also Smith 1986). At the same time, residents in these neighborhoods view the actions of the police as overly aggressive (Brunson 2007). Combined, these practices may lead victims in high-crime communities to question the ability of the police to effectively fight crime (Reisig and Parks 2000) and ultimately reduce the likelihood they will enlist police services. In short, prior research has not assessed the effects of offending on reporting independent of neighborhood context, and therefore findings from this research may inflate the extent to which reporting is influenced by criminal behavior.

As noted earlier, qualitative research may also overstate the association between offending and nonreporting if this relationship is stronger in impoverished, high-crime locations—where the bulk of research on this topic has been undertaken. In fact, relatively little is known about the extent to which offending affects reporting decisions within less distressed urban environments where the relationship may be much weaker. As outlined below, there are several reasons to expect that neighborhood context may *moderate* the relationship between offending and notification.

First, in disadvantaged, high-crime neighborhoods, illicit activity often occurs in public spaces (Berg and Rengifo 2009; Sullivan 1989), as offenders are “pulled” to the street by the lure of making money and “pushed” by a lack of personal space and access to a household in which to conduct their illegal activities (Rosenfeld et al. 2003). Illicit activity occurring in public spaces is generally subjected to more formal law than if it occurs in private spaces (see Black 1976) and police officers in these neighborhoods often know offenders by sight, which minimizes the likelihood that those involved in crime will be viewed as deserving victims and their complaints will be taken seriously (Klinger 1997). As a result, offenders in these environments come to recognize that they “cannot really be ‘victims’ in the eyes of the criminal justice system” (Topalli et al. 2002:337). By contrast, offenders operating in more affluent communities may have access to resources to conduct their illicit activities behind closed doors. Under these circumstances, the police are relatively unacquainted with active offenders and therefore are more willing to treat their complaints legitimately (Jacobs and Wright 2006). Moreover, offenders as well as their associates may hold more positive perceptions of law enforcement, making them more willing to enlist the police when victimized.<sup>3</sup> Combined, these ideas suggest that neighborhood context may influence the nature of relations between the police and offenders, which culminates in neighborhood-based differences in offenders’ willingness to report.

Second, the relationship between offending and reporting may differ across neighborhood contexts due to variation in the salience of oppositional conduct norms. Collectively these norms embody an honor culture and are often spatially concentrated in neighborhoods characterized by socioeconomic disadvantage and high crime rates (Cooney 1998). An honor culture deems the formal law as irrelevant to the satisfactory resolution of day-to-day conflicts (Jacobs and Wright 2006:25), promotes a type of hypermasculinity, and sanctions interpersonal aggression as a mechanism to resolve disputes (Anderson 1999; Horowitz 1983). Conventional modes of conflict resolution have little force within these social contexts, especially

for active offenders who are more likely to abide by the unique set of conduct norms that such a culture dictates (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003). Crime reporting is likely to have serious ramifications for an offender's reputation and personal safety because it threatens the very persona that most street offenders want to maintain—it sends the message that they are “incapable of handling their own business” (Lauritsen and Laub 2007:64; see also Cooney 1998). But beyond this, criminals who interact with the police in any capacity are likely to be branded as “snitches” and excluded from opportunities in the underground marketplace.

Although not well studied, it is unlikely that these same normative constraints on reporting exist for offenders residing in low poverty, safer neighborhoods where mainstream conduct norms often dominate the social order (see Baumgartner 1988; Luckenbill and Doyle 1989). Retributive violence is unlikely to receive strong normative support, even among residents who are frequently involved in criminal behavior. Under these circumstances, offenders often handle interpersonal disputes peacefully and rarely retaliate against those who have exploited them (see also Cooney 1998). It is also unlikely that offenders will be targeted for violent revenge if they enlist the services of the police. For these reasons, criminals operating in neighborhoods defined by lower levels of poverty and violent crime should be more willing to report their victimizations.

## Current Study

To summarize, there are several reasons to expect that offenders are reluctant to report their victimizations to the police. While critically important, most research on this issue examines the reporting behavior of a relatively circumscribed group of offenders—chronic offenders residing in high crime, disadvantaged neighborhoods. Therefore, past work may confound the effects of offending on police reporting with the known correlates of criminal behavior, particularly neighborhood-level factors. Moreover, studies have yet to examine if the relationship between criminal behavior and reporting varies across neighborhood contexts.

The current study uses data from the PYS to address four primary research questions about reporting. First, we assess whether individuals who are engaged in crime are less willing to report their victimization to the police. Second, because offenders possess many of the characteristics that are related to nonreporting, we examine whether the relationship between offending and reporting is explained by the characteristics of the victimization incident and the victim. Third, we assess whether neighborhood

disadvantage and crime rates confound the offending-reporting relationship. Finally, we examine whether the effect of offending on reporting varies according to these neighborhood characteristics.

## **Method**

### *Data*

The data used in this study were gathered as part of the PYS, an ongoing longitudinal investigation into the causes and consequences of delinquency and mental health problems that began in 1987 (Loeber et al., 1998). The sample was selected from boys enrolled in the first and seventh grades in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania public schools and the two cohorts, each consisting of 500 boys, were constructed to include a group of high-risk and nonhigh-risk respondents (see Loeber et al. 2008 for more detail on the PYS). We only use waves in which both victimization and offending were assessed. These waves covered ages 15 to 26 for the oldest cohort and ages 10 to 19 for the youngest cohort. Across all waves, the average retention rate was relatively high (92 percent for the youngest cohort and 89.5 percent for the oldest).<sup>4</sup>

Respondents in the PYS reported their experiences with two types of violent victimization; whether someone (1) used weapons, force or strong-armed methods to get money or things from them (robbery) and (2) injured or hurt them on purpose (assault). Respondents who reported that they had been victimized were asked a series of questions about the most recent three incidents of each type. For this study, the unit of analysis is the victimization incident; individuals who were not victimized in any of the waves are excluded from the analysis. Our final sample consists of 832 victimizations, reported by 371 respondents. The modal number of victimization incidents reported by victims is 1, with a maximum of 11 incidents reported.

### *Variables*

Appendix A provides additional information on the variables and their construction. Descriptive statistics for all independent variables are presented in Table 1. Variables that capture characteristics of the victimization incident were measured for each incident. Variables that measure time-varying individual-level characteristics, such as delinquent attitudes, refer to each respondent's attitudes and experiences in the year in which the victimization occurred. Finally, time-stable individual characteristics (e.g., race) were measured at one point in time.

**Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlations for all Variables.**

|                           | M or Prop. (SD)   | 1          | 2          | 3          | 4          | 5          | 6          | 7          | 8          | 9          | 10         | 11         | 12         | 13         | 14         | 15         | 16         | 17         | 18         | 19         |
|---------------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1 Police notification     | .31               | <b>1.0</b> |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| 2 Age                     | 17.06 (3.40)      | .129*      | <b>1.0</b> |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| 3 Black                   | .65               | -.022      | .116*      | <b>1.0</b> |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| 4 SES                     | 30.68 (13.00)     | .017       | -.372*     | -.224*     | <b>1.0</b> |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| 5 Moved/Guardian          | .37               | -.018      | .163*      | .124*      | -.059      | <b>1.0</b> |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| 6 Arrested                | .42               | -.047      | -.087*     | -.031      | .035       | .055*      | <b>1.0</b> |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| 7 Offending               | 2.15 (2.19)       | -.220*     | .051       | .062       | -.194*     | .177       | -.044      | <b>1.0</b> |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| 8 Known perpetrator       | .51               | -.074*     | -.125*     | .025       | .036       | .058       | -.002      | .042       | <b>1.0</b> |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| 9 Injury                  | .19               | -.119*     | .001       | -.033      | .041       | .059       | -.013      | -.022      | .033       | <b>1.0</b> |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| 10 Public location        | .06               | -.017      | .066       | .042       | .049       | .035       | .010       | .036       | .134*      | -.022      | <b>1.0</b> |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| 11 Robbery                | .60               | -.133*     | .014       | .109*      | -.138*     | .026       | .017       | .107*      | -.227*     | -.084*     | -.105*     | <b>1.0</b> |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| 12 Weapon used            | .47               | .067       | .310*      | .316*      | .302*      | .094*      | -.045      | .115*      | -.173*     | -.006      | .025       | .331       | <b>1.0</b> |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| 13 Gang membership        | .15               | -.075*     | -.002      | .127*      | -.129*     | .104*      | -.019      | .187*      | .052       | .034       | -.070      | -.017      | .058       | <b>1.0</b> |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| 14 Time use               | 1.02 (82)         | -.175*     | .206*      | .012       | -.236*     | .053       | -.049      | .362*      | -.034      | -.041      | .065*      | -.114*     | .076*      | .204*      | <b>1.0</b> |            |            |            |            |            |
| 15 Acceptance of violence | .01 (96)          | -.162*     | .127*      | .131*      | -.143      | .057       | -.074*     | .343*      | .024       | -.051      | .029       | .086*      | .091*      | .218*      | .279*      | <b>1.0</b> |            |            |            |            |
| 16 Peer offending         | 0.00 (98)         | -.102*     | -.109*     | .041       | -.048      | -.023*     | .019       | .242*      | -.051      | -.019      | .061       | .062       | .065*      | .142*      | .265*      | .218*      | <b>1.0</b> |            |            |            |
| 17 Police contact         | 2.40 (5.92)       | -.050      | .023       | .125*      | -.058*     | .120*      | -.054      | .315*      | .046       | -.085      | .009       | .029*      | .092*      | .157*      | .142*      | .129*      | .109*      | <b>1.0</b> |            |            |
| 18 Arrested               | .43               | -.010      | .282*      | .188*      | -.223*     | .233*      | .004       | .300*      | .092*      | .049       | .064       | -.018*     | .194*      | .154*      | .146*      | .131*      | .016       | .435*      | <b>1.0</b> |            |
| 19 NH disadvantage        | .25 (22)          | -.133*     | .052       | .355*      | -.200*     | -.081*     | -.046      | .200*      | -.017      | -.119*     | .051       | .090*      | .228*      | -.039      | .043       | .113*      | -.042      | .028       | .030       | <b>1.0</b> |
| 20 NH crime               | 7076.25 (4852.62) | -.136*     | .038       | -.267*     | -.031      | .141*      | -.040      | .131*      | -.015      | -.040      | -.123      | .109*      | .130*      | .079*      | -.019      | .072*      | .003       | .107*      | .062       | .217*      |

Note. SES = socioeconomic status; NH = Neighborhood. Correlations between two interval/ratio variables are Pearson's correlations, correlations between an interval/ratio variable and a dichotomous variable are point biserial correlations, and correlations between two dichotomous variables are phi coefficients. Standard deviations are in parentheses. \* $p < .05$ .

### Dependent Variable

*Police notification.* For each victimization incident, respondents were asked “When this happened was [the assault or robbery] reported to the police?” Responses of “yes” were coded as 1 and “no” as 0. Approximately 31 percent of all incidents were reported.

### Independent Variables

*Offending.* In every wave, respondents were asked to report whether they had committed each of 10 different types of offenses in the past year. These prevalence measures were then summed to generate a variety measure of self-reported offending that captures the number of different offense types that the respondent engaged in during the year he was victimized. Variety scores were used because they are generally considered more valid than other measures of delinquency, including frequency scores (Hindelang et al. 1981). On average, respondents committed 2.5 different types of offenses and approximately 22 percent of the sample did not report engaging in any of these criminal activities in the past year.<sup>5</sup> The most prevalent offense in the data is fighting (40.7 percent), followed by aggravated assault (23.6 percent) and hard drug sales (22 percent). The least common offense in the data is robbery (7.3 percent).

*Incident characteristics.* Studies have consistently found that incidents resulting in serious injuries and involving a weapon (e.g., Gottfredson and Hindelang 1979) are more likely to be reported; therefore, we incorporate a binary measure of victim injury scored 1 if the respondent suffered an injury and 0 otherwise. We also include a binary measure, weapon, coded 1 if the attacker used a weapon in carrying out the crime and 0 if not. In addition, we control for whether the victimization was a robbery (coded as 1) or assault (coded as 0) because there may be variation in reporting by crime type (Baumer 2002). Moreover, we include a binary variable, public location, capturing the location of the incident (1 = *public location* and 0 = *private location*), as well as a variable, known perpetrator, which measures whether the victim was acquainted with the offender (*yes* = 1 and *no* = 0).

*Individual and lifestyle characteristics.* We include several measures to assess whether the relationship between offending and reporting is confounded with the correlates of offending. These variables refer to the wave in which the victimization occurred. Gang membership (1 = *yes* and 0 = *no*) is derived from an item asking respondents whether they are currently in a gang. Peer offending is a 5-item standardized scale that gauges the

extent to which respondents report that their closest friends engage in serious criminal behavior. Higher scores indicate respondents are more immersed in delinquent or criminal peer networks.

We also incorporate a measure of the respondents' *acceptance of violence*. This measure is a standardized scale of 3 items, with high scores reflecting the respondent believed that it was not wrong to engage in a variety of violent behaviors. Situational theories argue that the amount of time one spends socializing in certain settings increases their likelihood of involvement in criminal activity (Osgood et al. 1996) and may signal a stronger commitment to a deviant lifestyle (Fleisher 1997). For these reasons, we control for respondents' *time use* by including an ordinal variable where higher values indicate the respondent spent more time out at night.

Because individuals who have been arrested may hold more negative views of the police (Brunson 2007; Cao, Frank, and Cullen 1996), we include a binary variable that captures if the respondent self-reported that he was *arrested* in the past year (1 = *yes* and 0 = *no*). Similarly, we control for the number of times the respondents reported having *police contact* in the past year either because they witnessed a crime or were suspected of committing one.

**Neighborhood context.** At each wave, respondents provided their home addresses that were then affixed to 1 of the 89 traditionally defined neighborhoods in Pittsburgh (see Peeples and Loeber 1994). Addresses were matched to data from the 1990 U.S. Census to create a regression weighted index of neighborhood disadvantage, which consists of 4 items: percent unemployed, percent female-headed households with children, percent of residents who are Black, and percent of persons in households below the federal poverty threshold ( $\alpha = .8$ ).<sup>6</sup>

We also include a measure of neighborhood *crime rates*. This variable, derived from official crime data collected annually by law enforcement officials in Pittsburgh, captures the number of index offenses known to the police in each neighborhood per 100,000 persons. Initial analysis showed that the distribution of the crime rate was skewed so this measure was transformed by calculating its square root.

## Control Variables

**Victim demographic and background factors.** We include several measures to control for the family and demographic characteristics of the respondent because evidence suggests these factors may be correlated with reporting

(see Skogan 1984). Victim's SES is measured using the Hollingshead (1975) index of social status, which is based on occupational prestige and education. Victim's race is captured with a binary variable, Black, with Blacks coded as 1 and Whites as 0. We also control for the victim's age at the time of incident. Because past work has found that mobility is a correlate of reporting (Baumer 2002), we include a binary variable coded 1 if the respondent moved census tracts since the previous wave and 0 otherwise. Finally, youth whose parents have been arrested may be more reluctant to contact the police out of fear of implicating their parents in a crime or because they hold more antagonistic views toward the law; therefore, we include a binary measure, parent/guardian arrested, which captures if either of the respondent's parents or guardians had ever been arrested.

### *Analytic Strategy*

To examine the relationship between offending, our other key variables, and reporting, we first estimate bivariate correlations among our measures. We then estimate the effect of offending on reporting, net of our control variables. Next, we add individual-, incident-, and neighborhood-level variables to the model to assess how they affect the relationship between offending and reporting. Finally, to determine if the relationship between offending and reporting varies based on neighborhood disadvantage and crime rates, we create multiplicative interaction terms between each of the neighborhood measures and offending. Because our dependent variable is dichotomous, we use logistic regression.

By design, the data set used here is comprised of multiple incidents of victimization nested within people. Therefore, victimizations are not independent from one another and the standard errors estimated in regression models may be invalid. To overcome this methodological challenge, a random intercept model is used to analyze the data. This model explicitly recognizes that victimizations experienced by the same person may be more similar to one another than victimizations experienced by a different person. This technique uses a respondent-specific intercept as a predictor in order to relax the assumption of conditional independence among the responses for the same individual given the covariates (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2008). The logistic random intercept model assumes the basic functional form:

$$\text{Logit}\{\text{Pr}(y_{ij} = 1|x_{ij}), \zeta_j\} = \beta_1 + \beta_2 x_{2j} + \beta_3 x_{3j} + \zeta_j.$$

In the equation,  $\beta_1$  is the pooled mean of the random intercepts,  $\beta_2$  is the effect of time-stable variable  $x_2$  on the likelihood of reporting for person  $j$ , and  $\beta_3$  is the effect of time-varying variable  $x_3$  on the likelihood of reporting for person  $j$  at victimization  $i$ . The person-specific random intercept is represented by  $\zeta_j$ , and it captures the effect of person-specific variables not included in the model. In short, the random intercept model provides a matrix-weighted average of the between (i.e., across subjects) and within-person estimators, giving it the ability to assess both constant and time-varying factors with relative efficiency (Greene 2003).<sup>7</sup> Based on initial likelihood ratio tests, we rejected the hypothesis that the subject-specific variation in reporting equals zero, which confirmed that random intercept models are warranted.

## Results

We begin by examining the bivariate correlations between offending, police reporting, and the factors that may account for the purported relationship between them (see Table 1). Two general findings emerge. First, offending has the strongest negative correlation with victims' decisions to report violence to the police ( $r_{bp} = -.22$ ). Second, several of the key explanatory variables—including acceptance of violence ( $r_{pb} = -.16$ ), involvement with criminal peers ( $r_{pb} = -.10$ ), time use ( $r_{pb} = -.18$ ), and neighborhood disadvantage and crime rates ( $r_{pb} = -.13$  and  $r_{pb} = -.14$ , respectively)—are also significantly correlated with police notification in the expected directions. As hypothesized, these variables are also correlated with involvement in crime, which suggests that they may explain the relationship between offending and reporting. Although being arrested and having contact with the police are significantly and positively correlated with offending ( $r_{pb} = .30$  and  $r_p = .32$ , respectively), contrary to our expectations, these two measures are not significantly associated with reporting. This may be due to the fact that these variables fail to capture whether the respondent felt the interaction was positive or negative, which may influence the effect of police contact on reporting.

To assess these relationships in a multivariate context, we first examine the association between offending and the probability of reporting net of our control variables (Table 2, model 1). We find that incidents in which the victim is involved in criminal activity are significantly less likely to be reported. Holding constant demographic factors and parental arrests, a one unit increase in the number of different types of criminal behaviors that the respondent participated in during the past year is associated with a 24-

**Table 2.** Random Intercept Logistic Regression Model Predicting Police Reporting By Victims (N = 832).

|   | Model 1  |      | Model 2    |      | Model 3    |      | Model 4   |      |
|---|----------|------|------------|------|------------|------|-----------|------|
|   | Coef.    | SE   | Coef.      | SE   | Coef.      | SE   | Coef.     | SE   |
| Constant  | -2.31**  | .881 | -1.53      | .941 | -1.57      | .971 | -1.13     | 1.01 |
| <b>Demographic factors and offending</b>        |          |      |            |      |            |      |           |      |
| Age   | .129**   | .035 | .100**     | .036 | .105**     | .040 | .101**    | .041 |
| Race  | -.282    | .260 | -.322      | .270 | -.245      | .284 | -.268     | .346 |
| SES   | .002     | .008 | .002       | .009 | -.001      | .009 | -.001     | .009 |
| Moved   | .009     | .237 | -.052      | .247 | -.110      | .255 | -.107     | .267 |
| Parent/guardian arrests                         | -.138    | .154 | -.063      | .249 | -.153      | .160 | -.120     | .145 |
| Offending                                       | -.267**  | .058 | -.266**    | .060 | -.213**    | .068 | -.202**   | .071 |
| <b>Incident characteristics</b>                 |          |      |            |      |            |      |           |      |
| Known perpetrator                               |          |      | -.365      | .195 | -.348      | .201 | -.362     | .206 |
| Injury  |          |      | .790**     | .248 | .758**     | .253 | .772**    | .263 |
| Public location                                 |          |      | -.363      | .476 | -.263      | .476 | -.277     | .492 |
| Incident type (1 = Robbery)                     |          |      | -.803**    | .239 | -.896**    | .256 | -.893**   | .264 |
| Weapon used                                     |          |      | .697*      | .266 | .622*      | .270 | .708*     | .279 |
| <b>Individual and lifestyle characteristics</b> |          |      |            |      |            |      |           |      |
| Gang membership                                 |          |      |            |      | -.180      | .242 | -.193     | .253 |
| Time use  |          |      |            |      | -.375*     | .160 | -.398*    | .165 |
| Acceptance of violence                          |          |      |            |      | -.376*     | .157 | -.353*    | .160 |
| Peer offending                                  |          |      |            |      | -.037      | .120 | -.043     | .125 |
| Police contacts                                 |          |      |            |      | .029       | .022 | .025      | .023 |
| Arrested  |          |      |            |      | .111       | .286 | .084      | .294 |
| <b>Neighborhood characteristics</b>             |          |      |            |      |            |      |           |      |
| Neighborhood characteristics                    |          |      |            |      |            |      | -1.26     | .717 |
| Neighborhood disadvantage                       |          |      |            |      |            |      | -3.51**   | 1.28 |
| Neighborhood crime rate                         |          |      |            |      |            |      | -415.81   |      |
| Model log likelihood                            | -451.38  |      | -433.03    |      | -421.87    |      | 67.21(19) |      |
| Chi-square (df)                                 | 39.39(6) |      | 59.29 (11) |      | 66.53 (17) |      |           |      |

Note. SES = socioeconomic status.  
 \*p < .05.  
 \*\*p < .01.

percent reduction in the odds of reporting to the police by victims  $\{100 \times [\exp(-.267) - 1]\}$ . We also find that incidents involving older victims are more likely to be reported. Significant effects were not observed for the other background factors, although the coefficients are in the expected direction.

Model 2 incorporates incident characteristics to determine if they account for any of the negative effect of offending on reporting decisions. Consistent with prior research, victims are more likely to notify the police if they are hurt during the incident or if a weapon is present. Moreover, they are less apt to report if they were robbed versus assaulted. The offending variable retains a strong negative relationship with reporting, suggesting that incident-level characteristics have a negligible influence on the effect of offending.

Next, to address whether the observed effect of offending on reporting can be accounted for by correlates of criminal activity, we add characteristics of the victim and their lifestyle to our model (Table 2, model 3). The results indicate that if the incident involved victims who spend a greater amount of time out at night or who harbor violent attitudes, it is less likely to be reported. Furthermore, consistent with the bivariate correlations, reporting is unrelated to whether victims were ever arrested or had contact with the police. Importantly, victims' criminal behavior retains a strong negative effect on reporting, but the magnitude of the coefficient is reduced by approximately 20 percent from model 2. This reduction suggests that the relationship between offending and reporting is partially accounted for by characteristics of the victim's lifestyle.<sup>8</sup>

In model 4, we add variables measuring neighborhood disadvantage and crime rates. Results indicate that incidents involving victims who reside in neighborhoods with higher rates of crime are significantly less likely to be reported to the police. However, controlling for neighborhood crime, the effect of disadvantage is not distinguishable from zero.<sup>9</sup> Offending maintains a strong negative relationship with reporting despite the inclusion of contextual conditions in the model, suggesting neighborhood crime rates and offending exert independent effects on police notification.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, in Table 3, we present models used to examine whether the relationship between offending and reporting varies as a function of neighborhood disadvantage or crime rates. We find that the interaction between neighborhood disadvantage and offending is statistically significant (model 1) as is the interaction between the neighborhood crime rate and offending (model 2).<sup>11</sup> Therefore, the effect of criminal behavior on reporting is

**Table 3.** Random Intercept Logistic Regression Model Predicting Police Notification By Victims: Interaction Effects ( $N = 832$ ).

|  | Model 1:<br>Disadvantage |       | Model 2: Crime<br>Rate |        |
|--|--------------------------|-------|------------------------|--------|
|  | Coef.                    | SE    | Coef.                  | SE     |
| Constant                                     | -0.624                   | 0.631 | -0.877                 | 0.726  |
| Demographic factors and offending            |                          |       |                        |        |
| Age  | .098*                    | 0.041 | 0.097*                 | 0.045  |
| Black  | 0.242                    | 0.345 | 0.275                  | 0.356  |
| SES  | -0.027                   | 0.009 | 0.001                  | 0.009  |
| Moved  | -0.151                   | 0.268 | -0.106                 | 0.274  |
| Parent/guardian arrested                     | -0.137                   | 0.144 | -0.098                 | 0.148  |
| Offending                                    | -0.051                   | 0.094 | -0.204                 | .072** |
| Incident characteristics                     |                          |       |                        |        |
| Known perpetrator                            | -0.369                   | 0.206 | -.340*                 | 0.21   |
| Injury                                       | .780**                   | 0.265 | 0.881*                 | 0.275  |
| Public location                              | -0.277                   | 0.505 | -0.16                  | 0.514  |
| Robbery                                      | -.902**                  | 0.265 | -0.992                 | 0.277  |
| Weapon used                                  | .742**                   | 0.279 | 0.685*                 | 0.292  |
| Individual and lifestyle characteristics     |                          |       |                        |        |
| Gang membership                              | -0.261                   | 0.268 | -0.093                 | 0.265  |
| Time use                                     | -.417*                   | 0.166 | -.402*                 | 0.168  |
| Acceptance of violence                       | -.349*                   | 0.16  | -.370*                 | 0.165  |
| Peer offending                               | -0.024                   | 0.126 | -0.125                 | 0.13   |
| Police contacts                              | 0.027                    | 0.023 | 0.039                  | 0.023  |
| Arrested                                     | 0.072                    | 0.295 | 0.074                  | 0.298  |
| Neighborhood characteristics                 |                          |       |                        |        |
| Neighborhood disadvantage                    | -.059*                   | 0.875 | -1.50*                 | 0.745  |
| Neighborhood crime                           | -3.37                    | 1.28  | -3.79**                | 1.37   |
| Interaction terms                            |                          |       |                        |        |
| Neighborhood disadvantage $\times$ offending | -0.711*                  | 0.327 | —                      | —      |
| Neighborhood crime $\times$ offending        | —                        | —     | -1.41*                 | 0.688  |
| Model log likelihood                         | -412.56                  |       | -386.08                |        |
| Chi-square ( <i>df</i> )                     | 67.53 (20)               |       | 63.91 (20)             |        |

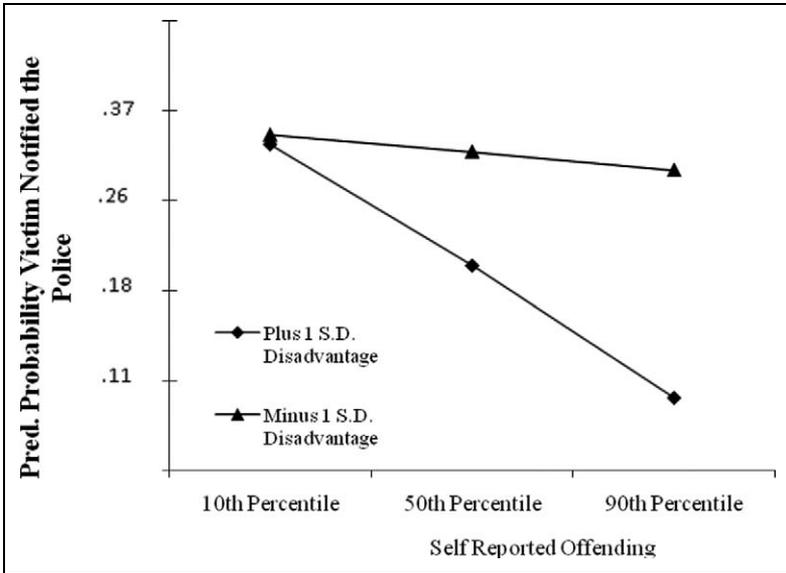
Note. SES = socioeconomic status.

\* $p < .05$ .

\*\* $p < .01$ .

moderated by both the level of disadvantage in a victim's neighborhood and the crime rate.

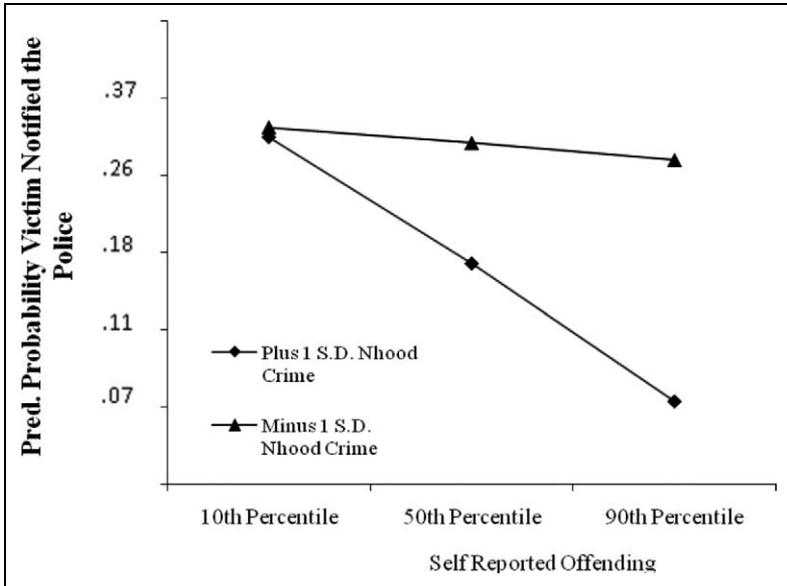
To illustrate the nature of these findings, in Figure 1, we display the effect of offending on the probability of reporting for incidents in which the



**Figure 1.** Effect of offending on the predicted probability of reporting to the police across levels of neighborhood disadvantage.

victim lives in a neighborhood with low ( $SD = -1$ ) and high ( $SD = +1$ ) levels of disadvantage.<sup>12</sup> We observe that for incidents in which the victim is from a neighborhood with lower levels of disadvantage, their level of involvement in criminal activity has a weak negative effect on reporting. By contrast, offending has a strong negative effect on reporting in highly disadvantaged neighborhoods. This suggests that the influence of criminal behavior on the probability of reporting is stronger for incidents in which the victim resides in a disadvantaged neighborhood.

In Figure 2, our measure of the neighborhood crime rate is substituted for structural disadvantage. Again we see that the relationship between offending and reporting is contingent on neighborhood context. Offending has little influence on reporting for incidents in which the victim lives in neighborhoods with crime rates that are 1 standard deviation below the mean. For victims living in high-crime neighborhoods (1  $SD$  above the mean), the probability that an incident will be reported to the police declines sharply as the victim's level of offending increases. In fact, the lowest probability of reporting is observed among victims who offend at



**Figure 2.** Effect of offending on the predicted probability of reporting to the police across levels of neighborhood crime rates.

a high rate and who live in a high-crime neighborhood. Taken together, these results suggest that the effect of criminal activity on reporting is especially strong for incidents in which the victim resides in a high crime, highly disadvantaged neighborhood.<sup>13</sup>

## Discussion

According to Topalli et al. (2002:337), “One of criminology’s dirty little secrets is that much serious crime, perhaps most, takes place beyond the reach of criminal law because it is perpetrated against individuals who themselves are involved in law breaking.” Therefore, it is surprising that relatively little quantitative research has sought to explore how involvement in illicit behavior affects one’s willingness to seek out the formal law when victimized. The current study builds on past research to provide a more complete understanding of why incidents of assault and robbery go unreported to the police.

Several key findings emerge from our research. First, consistent with qualitative studies, we found that incidents in which the victim had engaged

in a wider variety of crimes in the past year were less likely to be reported to the police. Although the effect of offending on reporting was reduced approximately 20 percent by the inclusion of variables that are associated with criminal behavior, offending still maintained a strong independent effect. Therefore, the relationship between offending and reporting *cannot be fully explained* by offenders' tendency to have more interaction with the police or to live in distressed neighborhoods, nor can it be explained by the company offenders keep, their tolerance for violence or the dynamics of their lifestyle. These findings verify ideas that emerge from qualitative research but extend them to a multivariate framework where we were able to control for factors related to both offending and reporting using a more diverse sample comprised of both offenders and nonoffenders who reside in a wide range of neighborhood contexts.

Although, our independent variables did not fully explain the relationship between offending and reporting, several of them were significantly associated with reporting behavior. Arguably, the most interesting of these variables is neighborhood crime rates. Victims living in high-crime areas are less likely to notify the police. While researchers increasingly have begun to explore the contextual determinants of reporting behavior (e.g., Baumer 2002), the effect of crime rates has gone virtually unexamined. Our results suggest that community crime rates are perhaps more important in shaping victims' decisions to report than structural disadvantage.

Combined, the findings indicate that many studies of reporting provide a somewhat incomplete explanation of why some victims choose not to enlist the services of the police because they omit measures of offending. While excluding key predictors can lead to omitted variable bias, our results do not negate the conclusions reached by previous research: Incident-level characteristics and certain demographic factors (e.g., age) significantly influence reporting decisions. As such, offending and related measures correlated with offending seem to meaningfully *supplement*, rather than *supplant*, prior explanations for nonreporting.

Still, the question remains, if characteristics of the victim, their neighborhood, and the victimization incident do not explain why offenders are reluctant to report, then what does? Existing research offers several plausible explanations. For example, offenders' reluctance to call the police may stem from concerns about implicating themselves in their own unlawful actions (Rosenfeld et al. 2003) or fears that reporting will result in retaliation or damage to their reputation. Offenders may also be unwilling to report because they view the police negatively or feel that they were treated unfairly in the past when stopped or arrested. Our data do not allow us to

capture these potential reasons for nonreporting; therefore, additional research is needed to assess the validity of these explanations.

Our second key finding is that while incidents in which victims were more involved in crime were less likely to be reported to the police, the magnitude of this effect was context-specific. We found that the negative effect of offending on reporting was most pronounced for incidents involving victims who resided in neighborhoods marked by high crime rates and elevated levels of structural disadvantage. By comparison, for incidents in which the victim lived in more affluent and safer neighborhoods, there was a weaker relationship between offending and reporting. While qualitative research generally concludes that criminals are unwilling or unable to use formal social control, this assumption seems to apply mainly to those who reside in distressed neighborhoods. Offenders are not entirely unwilling to access the legal system (Topalli et al. 2002); rather, their decisions to report their victimizations to the police are shaped by neighborhood context.

As we noted above, there are a number of reasons to expect that the relationship between offending and reporting is exacerbated in disadvantaged, high-crime neighborhoods. Neighborhood differences in cultural or social organization or in the nature of police-offender interactions perhaps cause variation in the offending-reporting relationship. The normative constraints on reporting, which exist in impoverished neighborhoods may not apply to offenders living in middle-class places where individuals manage conflicts differently and where an ominous reputation is less important for one's well-being. Unfortunately, we lack measures that would allow us to isolate these explanations. Exploring these alternative explanations should be a priority of future research.<sup>14</sup>

The findings from this study have implications for research on violence, victimization, and mobilization of the law. Data amassed from crimes known to the police are commonly used by government agencies to allocate policing services and by researchers to generate knowledge about the etiology and consequences of criminal activity across places (Gottfredson and Hindelang 1981). Our results suggest that official crime data are likely to underreport robbery and assaults committed against actors involved in a wide variety of illegal behavior, especially those who live in high crime, disadvantaged neighborhoods—a group that is particularly vulnerable to victimization. Therefore, studies using official data to explain the geographic patterning of crime cannot assume that the proportion of crimes reported to the police is stable across different areas (see also Goudriaan et al. 2006).

But beyond this, the reluctance of criminals in distressed communities to report their victimizations may also contribute to high crime rates in

disadvantaged neighborhoods by promoting cycles of retaliatory violence. When victims are unable to turn to the formal law, they must employ other tactics to resolve their disputes, one of which is violent retaliation. To be clear, we cannot speak to the *type* of conflict management strategies offenders in disadvantaged, high-crime neighborhoods routinely employ; however, research indicates that when serious disputes arise within these contexts, they are more likely to prompt retaliatory violence (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003). In contrast, in middle- and upper-class neighborhoods, disputants often resolve their grievances using nonviolent forms of conflict management—for instance, they call upon the police to “prosecute violence” (Cooney 1998:114) or they avoid or tolerate conflict with others; disputes rarely erupt into ongoing “aggressive confrontation” (Baumgartner 1988:82). To the extent that offenders in disadvantaged, high-crime neighborhoods use interpersonal violence to settle their conflicts, our results suggest that the relatively high rates of violent retaliation observed in these neighborhoods are partially due to offenders’ unwillingness to enlist the services of the police when victimized (Jacobs and Wright 2006; Loftin 1986).

Finally, our results may also provide insight into the nature of the victim-offender overlap. One of the most persistent findings in criminological research is that offenders are victimized at a higher rate than nonoffenders (see Lauritsen and Laub 2007). Some argue that criminals are especially attractive targets because they are perceived to have a low probability of reporting to the police (Sampson and Lauritsen 1990; Singer 1986). To the extent that this explanation is true, our findings imply that we should observe a weak relationship between criminal behavioral and victimization in neighborhoods defined by lower levels of serious crime and structural disadvantage—where offenders are more likely to notify the police when victimized—and a stronger relationship in impoverished, high-crime neighborhoods (see Berg and Loeber, 2011). These ideas suggest a mechanism that may help to unpack the nature of the victim-offender overlap, and therefore warrant additional empirical attention.

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## Notes

1. One study has examined the relationship between self-reported offending and victimization reporting (Sparks, Genn, and Dodd 1977). This research failed to find a significant relationship between these two variables using a sample of Londoners; however, it suffers from a small sample size ( $n = 76$ ) and low survey response rate (35 percent), which makes it difficult to interpret the results.
2. It is important to recognize that access to law enforcement is not formally denied to those who break the law. Studies describe drug dealers who have called the police to report the theft of ill-gotten property under the ruse that it was earned legally (Jacobs 2000). Some offenders report seeking the help of law enforcement when they were in immediate physical danger or a family member was seriously injured (Rosenfeld et al. 2003).
3. Research has found that residents living in less disadvantaged neighborhoods and those with lower crime rates have more favorable perceptions of the police (Reisig and Parks 2000; Sampson and Bartusch 1998), but no work that we know of assesses differences in *offenders'* perceptions of the police across different neighborhood contexts.
4. Research has found no evidence of selective attrition in the PYS with regard to SES, race, initial risk rates, nonlethal victimization, or involvement in criminal behavior (Loeber et al. 2008).
5. We excluded anyone who had not experienced victimization from the data set; therefore, the relatively high prevalence of criminal activity observed in our sample is not unexpected, given that victimization has a robust relationship with offending (Lauritsen and Laub 2007).
6. If a neighborhood consisted of more than one census tract, averages of tract socioeconomic data were computed and applied to the neighborhood (see Wikstrom and Loeber 2000).
7. Our study must confront two possible forms of model bias. First, some respondents are clustered within the same neighborhood. This raises the possibility that our observations on these individuals are not independent from one another, which may introduce bias into the standard errors (Greene 2003). To assess the

potential impact of nonindependence among observations, we reestimated the models using the generalized linear latent and mixed models (GLLAMM) routine in Stata, which provides robust standard errors based on the sandwich estimator. These estimates do not rely on the model being properly specified or the model residuals being independent of one another (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2008). Our findings (available upon request) were substantively the same as those presented here. Second, the results could be subject to selection bias, which is more difficult to manage. Victims are not a random sample of the population; therefore, our models estimate the effects of our covariates on the probability of reporting for males who have been the victim of robbery or assault. Excluding nonvictims from the sample may lead to sample selection bias even though we are only interested in victims (see Berk 1983). Such bias will occur when the disturbances for the selection process (i.e., victimization) are correlated with the disturbances from the substantive process of interest (i.e., reporting). To adequately address this issue, we would require identifying a valid exclusion restriction (i.e., a variable that predicts victimization but not reporting; see Bushway, Johnson, and Slocum 2007). Moreover, the results from such a model would no longer be comparable to those in the research literature, which exclusively uses subsets of victims. While selection bias is an important issue, we do not have the data necessary to adequately address this issue here.

8. Due to the low prevalence of certain offenses, we do not have sufficient power to examine if the findings varied according to offense type. Instead, we collapsed the 10 offenses into two variables: “violence” and “property/drug offenses,” which were constructed as offending variety scores. We estimated two sets of models that were identical to those noted in Tables 2 and 3; the offending variables were added separately because of their relatively high correlation. The results for each set of models—estimating direct and interaction effects—were similar to those generated here based on the overall offending variety score, but the effects of violence on reporting were slightly weaker relative to the effects of property/drug offenses. Furthermore, to gain a better sense of the role of drug dealing in shaping the relationship between offending and reporting, we created a binary term to assess whether the victim sold drugs in the past year. The drug dealing variable was then added to the main and interaction effects models. The results from both models showed that drug dealing had a negative effect on reporting, although it was not significant at  $\alpha = .05$ . Moreover, the substantive results remained unchanged and offending retained a negative, significant relationship with reporting though the effect was somewhat attenuated. These results suggest the offending-reporting link is not explained by drug dealers’ reluctance to call the police when victimized while dealing.

9. Additional analysis indicated that neighborhood disadvantage had a significant negative relationship with reporting when crime rates were omitted from the model 4 ( $b = -1.39, p = .047$ ). Results are available by request.
10. Some research has found a curvilinear relationship between reporting and poverty (Baumer 2002; Goudriaan et al. 2006). Therefore, in a supplemental set of analyses, we added a squared term for disadvantage and neighborhood crime rates to examine if these effects are curvilinear. None of the squared terms were significant.
11. The interaction terms were not jointly modeled because they were strongly correlated with one another; moreover, combining the terms in a single model did not improve fit based on likelihood ratio tests comparing a model with a single term and a model with both terms.
12. Prior to estimating the models with the interaction terms, we mean centered all the model variables with the exception of the binary indicators.
13. Because individuals living in impoverished neighborhoods are likely to be poor, it is possible that the significant interaction we observe might be partially attributable to a significant interaction between SES and offending. To examine this possibility, we reestimated model 1 in Table 3, substituting individual-level SES for neighborhood disadvantage in the interaction term. This interaction term was not significant, which suggests that it is neighborhood disadvantage, rather than individual-level poverty, that conditions the effect of offending on reporting. We also conducted additional checks to make sure the model was properly specified. We examined whether either of the neighborhood context variables moderated the effect of any of our key independent variables (police contact, peer delinquency, attitudes toward violence and lifestyle). None of these interactions were significant.
14. It should be noted that we cannot rule out the possibility that contextual variability in the offending-reporting relationship may be due to unmeasured differences across neighborhoods in either the nature of offenders' illegal behavior or their victimization incidents. For example, if offenders in high crime, disadvantaged neighborhoods are more likely than offenders in other communities to be victimized while offending, they may be less likely to report their victimization to the police (see Zavala 2010). Future work should explore this issue using more detailed offending and victimization data.

## Appendix Description of Scales

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### Variable Name and Item Statements

Acceptance of violence (mean score scale): How wrong do you think it is for someone to

- (1) "hit someone with the idea of hurting that person?"
- (2) "attack someone with a weapon or with the idea of seriously hurting that person?"
- (3) "use a weapon, force, or strong-arm methods to get money or things from people?"

Responses: Very wrong Wrong A little wrong Not wrong  $\alpha = .90$

Peer Offending (mean score scale): During the past year how many of your friends have:

- (1) "hit someone with the idea of hurting that person?"
- (2) "attacked someone with a weapon or with the idea of seriously hurting that person?"
- (3) "used a weapon, force, or strong-arm methods to get money or things from people?"
- (4) "stolen something worth more than \$100?"
- (5) "sold hard drugs such as heroin, cocaine, or Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD)?"

Responses: None of them Half of them Most of them All of them  $\alpha = .88$

Offending (variety score scale): In that past year have you:

- ( 1) "stolen or tried to steal something worth between \$50 and \$100?"
- ( 2) "stolen or tried to steal something worth more than \$100?"
- ( 3) "gone joyriding, that is, taken a motor vehicle, such as a car or motorcycle, for a ride or drive without the owner's permission?"
- ( 4) "knowingly bought, sold or held stolen goods or tried to do any of these things?"
- ( 5) "gone into or tried to go into a building to steal something?"
- ( 6) "sold hard drugs such as heroin, cocaine, or LSD?"
- ( 7) "sold marijuana or hashish?"
- ( 8) "used a weapon, force, or strong-arm methods to get money or things from people?"
- ( 9) "attacked someone with a weapon or with the idea of seriously hurting or killing them?"
- (10) "hit someone with the idea of hurting them?"

Responses: Yes No

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### Author Biographies

**Mark T. Berg** is an assistant professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at Indiana University-Bloomington. His research interests include the etiology and consequences of victimization, interpersonal violence, and the neighborhood context of antisocial behavior.

**Lee Ann Slocum** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Her research interests include the effect of context on behavior, including crime reporting; stability and change in behavior over time; and research methods.

**Rolf Loeber** is Distinguished Professor in the Department of Psychiatry, School of Medicine, at the University of Pittsburgh. His research interests include juvenile antisocial behavior and delinquency, substance use, and mental health problems.