

Abstract

The efficacy of citizens to participate in neighborhood-watch activities and report signs of trouble is important for safeguarding communities against crime. Community policing is a key policing strategy for utilizing the capability of residents to solve local crime-related problems. However, variability in social cohesion among communities profoundly affects the contribution of individuals towards policing. After 7 years of a community policing intervention in suburban Nairobi, Kenya, this study assesses the program as a state-initiated and community-sustained security venture. We compare micro-scaled concentrations of different property and violent crimes to identify geographic variations over time using kernel density estimates and spatio-temporal scan statistics. Multi-level regression models assess the direct and conditioned perceptions of individuals and their neighbors, and how these perceptions influenced crime variation during the pre- and post-intervention periods of community policing. Both the density estimates and the scan statistics pinpoint a disproportionate crime reduction across neighborhoods. The research findings also depict an interaction between the communal willingness to participate in neighborhood-watch activities and the relative crime decline. In particular, those communities that have good relations with the police are more inclined to involve themselves in community policing. The findings of this study are discussed in terms of their implications for policy.