

## Environmental Factors that Contribute to Crimes in the 40th Police Precinct of Bronx, NY

### Abstract

Understanding why certain individuals engage in criminal activity is a common concern among criminologists. Fortunately, there are a few theorists that help explain why certain crimes happen in particular locations. “Environmental criminologists are a family of theorists that share a common interest in criminal events and the immediate circumstances in which they occur” (Mazerolle, Wortley & Richard 2008). In other words, criminal activity can be analyzed in specific environments and environmental factors which affect criminal behavior can be determined. For instance, Robert J Sampson published an article describing how a society can develop into two different environments, civilized versus criminal, within the same location. I have contributed to the field of environmental criminology by analyzing crime within a borough and a precinct of my choosing and further examining which factors influence high rates of crime in these areas: I focused on the Bronx and its 40th police precinct in New York City. I discovered that robbery and felony assault were problematic in the 40th precinct when compared to the rest of the Bronx. After noting these problematic crimes, I identified five different hotspots within this precinct to examine the presence of selected environmental factors. In order to examine the different hotspots and measure the presence of these factors, I used Google Earth to conduct a systematic social observation. One of the key findings within this project was to look for four environmental factors that influenced five different hotspots within the 40th police precinct: The four environmental factors I focused on were parks, stores, public housings, and trees. I noticed that the high crime rate can be attributed to how all the environmental factors can prompt robbery and felony assaults to take place within the area. Furthermore, crime rates in the police precinct, in all eight forms of felony, were considerably higher compared to the entire

borough. To conclude, I will be discussing future ideas on how to help combat crime within the communities.