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The Orderliness of Urban “Disorder”: Drug Dealing “Careers” and the Local Interaction Order of a Place

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Biographical information

Waverly Duck (corresponding author) is an Associate Fellow affiliated with the Center for Research on Inequalities and the Life Course at Yale University. His research interests focus primarily on inequality using ethnographic methods to study the orderliness of recognizable situated practices concerning gender, race, age and class. He is interested in the observable and locally recognized mechanisms which cause and subsequently reproduce inequality. This approach leads to a deeper understanding of the local processes of inequality in any given situation, and serves as a crucial counterpoint to macro-level analyses of social inequality. This dual emphasis on a local and situated approach to inequality and an ethnographic method to connect the micro and the macro is the cornerstone of Waverly's research agenda.

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Abstract

Based on ethnographic data, this essay analyzes the social order properties of a poor urban street, in a small city in the northeast United States, on which drug dealing is the principle occupation; relating the local social order of the neighborhood to the demands and practices of drug dealing careers as they occur in this place. Rather than treating drug dealing as an agent of disorder, we focus on the order properties of drug dealing and examine the interface between drug dealing and the ordered character of the local code of conduct. Rather than treating the drug dealers as predators, we focus on their status as long term residents and their integration into community life. We detail the phenomenon Elijah Anderson called the "code of the street" – as a set of practices and social markers – a local Interaction Order (Goffman 1983; Rawls 1987) – that furnishes the basic day to day sensemaking tools for residents. We propose that this order has a constitutive character that furnishes the stable conditions (Garfinkel 1967) for meaningful social action and identity in the neighborhood. In a context of industrial decline and urban poverty, drug dealing careers constitute a major socialization factor in this neighborhood, that touches everyone here – especially children.

Introduction

It has become popular to refer to poor urban areas as disorganized, to the crime that characterizes them as opportunistic, and to the life chances of residents in terms of probabilities largely dependent on personal characteristics (e.g., self-control, intelligence and long-term planning). We argue that this view does not accord well with the experience of living and working in the poor urban neighborhood we studied. There crime is often a career, life chances are closely tied to local experience and opportunity, and everyday life is orderly – but in ways that do not accord well with middle class standards of behavior. To be seen as order rather than disorder the "code of this street" must be understood in context as a set of sensemaking tools and strategies oriented toward the exigencies of "just this" place and "just these" drug dealing careers. As such, the practices comprising this "code" furnish a shared context of background conditions that are constitutive of the social objects in that space: of how persons and actions are seen, of what gaze means, of what a way of walking means, or whether a way of dressing is a threat or not, or marks a trusted identity or not.

The idea that such places are orderly is not itself new. Since William Foote Whyte's *Street Corner Society* (1943), ethnographic studies such as Mitch Duneiers's *Slim's Table* (1994) and Eliot Liebow's *Tally's Corner* ([1967]2003) have documented that social interaction in poor and minority settings can have an orderly character. However, a focus on culture and values, may suggest that such orders attach to people and groups, and to their beliefs and values, rather than to places and situations. This interpretation can obscure the situated and constitutive character of the interactional practices that characterize specific locations and/or worksites and lead to the placement of undue emphasis on individuals and their choices. The people living in the neighborhood we studied often espouse middle class and family values and exhibit an orientation toward middle class aspirations. The local practices which they enact, however, tend to support the locally prominent job of drug dealing, even though it clashes with their values. Following Elijah Anderson's *Code of the Street* (1999) we adopt the distinction between "street" and "decent" with regard to this difference. However, we treat the distinction as between the local order properties of a place and the values of residents – rather than as a distinction between persons. The drug dealers we spoke with

espoused "decent" values, but their practices, like those of all residents were "street" when they were working on the street. We argue that it is the order properties of interactional scenes, not the values of people that are distinctly different in such places, and that it is these order properties that explains what happens there. Most people living here have "decent" values and yet exhibit an orientation toward "street" on the street. Following Erving Goffman and Harold Garfinkel we argue that the Interaction Order properties of the "code of this street" furnish an ordering framework for interaction that is constitutive of objects, identities and action in that place and to which participants must adhere in order to make sense and stay safe (Goffman 1983, Rawls 1978, Garfinkel 1963).

Over the course of four years of ethnographic observation the neighborhood and street we studied (which we call Lyford Street, in the city of Bristol Hill – both pseudonyms) exhibited a high degree of local order that remained consistent in its details (although disruptions in the form of shootings, stick-ups, and police made the order episodic). The drug dealing was long term – rather than opportunistic, and highly integrated into the social structure of the neighborhood. The primary drug dealt was powdered cocaine – not crack or heroin – and the drug dealers themselves were said to rarely use drugs. Buyers did not live in the neighborhoods. Typical markers of drug dealing such as broken windows and broken streetlamps were indeed characteristic of the street, as leading theories would predict. But, rather than resulting from neglect, and constituting an inducement to locate drug dealing here, Lyford Street was the principle drug dealing street in this city and had been for 30 years. We observed windows and streetlamps being regularly broken (after they were fixed) by "workers" hired by the drug dealers in order to enhance their security in this space.

The popular approach to drugs and drug dealing pictures these activities as predatory – the province of dealers and street gangs who stand apart from the neighborhoods on which they are said to prey. Drug buyers, on the other hand, are often assumed to live locally. Ordinary residents are typically pictured as separate from drug dealers and their "gangs". It is also popular to characterize not only the people and the place, but also the local culture as impoverished: a "culture of poverty" that is less rich than that of the dominant middle class (Lewis 1961; Moynihan 1965; Mayer 1997).

Residents are said to lack appropriate values. Neighborhoods are pictured as inviting the attention of drug dealers because they lack the social cohesion – or "collective efficacy" – necessary to remedy the physical and social deficits which characterize them (Wilson and Kelling 1982; Sampson 2004; Morenoff et. al. 2001; Sampson & Raudenbush 1999, 2004; St. Jean 2008). In interviews and published accounts that sponsor these views the drug dealers themselves are sometimes quoted as saying "No it's not that" as they try to counter this interpretation of their actions (Jacobs et. al 2003; Jacobs 2004; Jacobs & Wright 2006). From the drug dealer's perspective it seems to be less about "opportunity" and weak social links and more about jobs, social cohesion and a positive relationship with the neighborhood. The residents of poor urban neighborhoods, particularly poor minority men, have historically found themselves largely excluded from the job market. Under such conditions these men have cooperated to create jobs for themselves in various underground economies.[1]

Sudhir Venketesh (2006) has offered an important alternative view of residents and drug dealers operating in a more cooperative relationship. He argues that drug dealing cannot be understood apart from its relationship to the neighborhood social setting in which it occurs. The situation we found on Lyford Street accords in essential ways with what Venkatesh found in his study of Chicago. But, our emphasis is slightly different. We argue that it is not possible to understand what goes on in a neighborhood, particularly with regard to why children who grow up there often engage in criminal careers, without understanding the local order practices of drug dealing and their relationship to the neighborhood in which they occur. The "big city" scale of Venkatesh's study also makes for important differences. Unlike larger cities where drug dealers may move frequently in order to elude the police, and thus be highly organized and on the lookout for better places from which to deal drugs, Bristol Hill is much smaller in scale. There were only two streets in Bristol Hill where drug dealing occurred with any significance. These two streets were highly desirable for dealing drugs in ways we detail below. According to our informants the dealers have not migrated from their spaces on

[1] Lest we be accused of a sexual bias, it is important to note that women play no role in drug dealing on Lyford Street. In fact, the attitude of the drug dealers here toward women is very 1950's Hollywood. Women are portrayed as either virgins or whores. But, they are never drug dealers and there is no sex work on this street.

those streets since at least the 1980's. And, on Lyford Street it is understood to be a requirement that they live on the street.

Thus, the interface between "decent" citizens and drug dealers on the street runs very deep. They are often members of the same families, living on the same street. Because the dealers grow up, marry and raise their own children on the street where they work they are related to many people on the street. Unlike drug dealers in larger cities, who may need to compete for new and better places suitable for selling drugs, the dealers on Lyford Street face a very different challenge: to make the permanent space they already occupy as secure as possible and to defend it against encroachment by outsiders. As a consequence, drug dealers in Bristol Hill have a very strong attachment to place.

In fact, we learned during discussions with residents that a strong attachment to place characterizes the neighborhood as a whole. Even several very successful families have elected to remain in the neighborhood because of the high value they place on this attachment. We were told that 'insider' status requires not only living in the neighborhood and working in Bristol Hill – but also either being born there – or having other relatives who were born there. The attitude toward membership for residents as a whole is in many ways that of a village rather than a city.

Studies of drug dealing in large cities like Chicago – which make up much of the literature – describe drug dealers as organized into complex gangs (Venkatesh 1997, 2006; Patillo 1999, 2007; Short 1974; Thrasher 1927). In large urban areas it makes sense that dealers would more formally organize for efficiency, to reduce competition, and to evade police detection. But, in Bristol Hill, a much smaller urban area, with only two spots that are amenable to drug dealing, the same strategies have not been employed. The type of gang, or corporate, organization found in places like Chicago likely does not have the same utility. Although there is obviously an organized structure behind the supply and finance of drugs, the dealers themselves function as entrepreneurs, with direct and independent connections to the suppliers, and the typical elements of gang organization are missing.

It would make sense that since the dealers have worked the same spot for several decades police knowledge of their activities would be extensive and it is. We know from time spent with the police that they know what we know about drug dealing on Lyford

Street. We have observed extensive undercover surveillance operations (because of the insider character of the street, however, these operations are quite obvious) and the police do arrest the dealers with some frequency. But, questions about the "effectiveness" of police practices in curbing drug dealing on the street overlook essential aspects of the context. The drug dealers on Lyford Street have developed sophisticated work practices (which we detail below) that, combined with the benefits of location, make it difficult for the police to actually catch them with drugs. When they are caught there are other members of the group (often family members) ready to step in and take their places. Because it is the principle occupation they cannot stop and still support their families.

There is a strong sense in which the drug dealers on Lyford Street operate in what are in effect extended kin networks: The drug dealing network we know the most about consisting of brothers, uncles and first and second cousins along with unrelated Lyford Street "insiders". Their practices are aimed at protecting the spot where they work, avoiding arrest and providing a continual source of labor that remains within the circle of Lyford Street insiders when they are arrested. Most of the men in this neighborhood will cycle in and out of prison and most of the children growing up here will have fathers, brothers, uncles, cousins and/or grandfathers in prison. That makes it problematic to talk about the relationship between drug dealing and the community – or to talk about the effects of drug dealing on the community. Drug dealing and kin networks are so closely intertwined that it is difficult to make a distinction. It also complicates the idea that police intervention could be "effective". For many residents it is an intrusion that creates chaos and danger – not a source of order and protection. Any child growing up here will be exposed to the practices of both drug dealing and police action on the street – many in the home – and most will get caught up in the social order practices that develop to facilitate and protect the work of drug dealing from an early age.

Because of their extended kinship relations it is a mistake to try analyzing the behavior of the drug dealers in this place as gang organizations. Defining them as a gang affords the police additional powers under the RICO Statutes in dealing with them – and the police tend to take this approach. But, it obscures the actual relationships and the motivations for violence that occur within and between groups (Duck 2009; Jacobs 2004). Subjecting a kinship network to RICO statutes, we suspect, has a different effect

from subjecting a gang to such statutes – and we wonder about the legitimacy of applying the statute to a kinship group.[2]

Young children in this neighborhood are socialized into the code of this street and the practices facilitating drug dealing from a very young age. Everyone on the street has to master those practices even just to get on to and off of the street safely. But, of those who are not actively dealing drugs, the children who play in their front yards and ride their bikes on the street are of necessity the most deeply involved. From the ages of five or six children – all boys – can earn money running errands to the corner store – buying food and drink for dealers who cannot leave their corners. These activities are not illegal – but tend to forge lasting relationships between younger and older boys. For very poor children the opportunity to earn money may be very desirable. For some families that typically run out of money between "checks" this may be the only source of food money toward the end of the month – and as such these activities may be encouraged (or at least not actively discouraged) by parents.

Drug dealing takes on the characteristics of a career as it occurs on Lyford Street. There are systematic steps required for young boys in this neighborhood to move "up" and achieve dealer status. Mary Patillo-McCoy (1999) and Venkatesh (2006) both describe a similar career ladder among the drug dealers they observed.[3] In our neighborhood these steps include: doing small favors for dealers and proving trustworthy; initiation into the career through early arrest (and the loyalty test involved); learning to use money systematically and being able to demonstrate that to older dealers; learning how to take orders; learning how to keep safe; and learning how to pick out a customer (which translates into looking for white people – who make up most of the customers in

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[2] The RICO statutes assume that an organization has been formed as a strategy for pursuing an illegal activity while avoiding legal consequences. Kinship groups are a natural social formation – whether or not they pursue illegal activities – they have not been formed in order to do so. Furthermore, membership in a kinship group is not a matter of individual choice, and given this fact it seems highly problematic that an individual can be prosecuted for belonging to a kinship group. RICO statutes also exist for the purpose of breaking up organizations formed to pursue illegal activities. A kinship network cannot be broken up – it exists through the blood relations of the members.

[3] Both Patillo-McCoy and Venkatesh describe to their dealers as working in gangs. The dealers we studied are not organized as a gang. They are independent dealers who have autonomy and control and can stop without consequence by other dealers who include suppliers.

this largely black area).[4] Ironically, many of these skills are also requirements for success in middle class occupations.

Young boys progress through stages from running errands to working as 'lookout kids' for the dealers. They may be asked to 'hold' drugs for dealers in emergency situations. When they become drug dealers, called 'corner boys', and begin dealing drugs for themselves there are three more stages they pass through: The youngest and newest dealers work the early morning shift. This is the least lucrative shift and the only one during which the younger children are in school – and thus not available to run errands or act as look-outs. Competence at this position earns them the right to work the afternoon and then the early evening shift. Finally if they succeed at the first two positions, dealers can move up to the much more lucrative night shift and become known as 'old heads'. They will typically be arrested several times as they progress from the bottom to the top of this network – earning kudos for loyalty by refusing to give the police information. These tests tend to begin early – largely, as we understand it, because the sentences for adult drug dealers are so harsh – and many eight to sixteen year olds will find themselves in court facing juvenile time because they are protecting an older dealer (sometimes also a relative).

Elijah Anderson's argument in *Code of the Street* (1999), that a localized code of social behavior organizes many aspects of interaction on the street, is significant throughout the analysis. Anderson identified a series of factors that provide a context for the use of an informal but well-known code of behavior that often develops as a coping mechanism in violent inner-city areas. This "code of the street" regulates dress, behavior, and verbal expression, and adherence to it often has life and death consequences for inner city youth. In this paper we examine the issue of how a local code can be used to understand the order properties of a social situation. We present our analysis of a local social order that has developed to deal with the exigencies of a single place, with variations by time and situation.

We argue that all of these practices together comprise a constitutive framework for social action, without which objects, actions and identities in this context do not make sense. In Goffman's (1959) sense these practices constitute performance criteria for

[4] The police told us that targeting white buyers would be race discrimination. Targeting black sellers is not.

establishing identity, competence and loyalty in interaction in this place. In Garfinkel's (1963, 1967) sense they both require and demonstrate mutual commitment and reciprocity of a high degree. Treating the practices characteristic of such places as comprising an Interaction Order (Goffman 1983, Rawls 1987) – as orderly rather than disorderly – challenges the prevailing understanding in essential ways. The Interaction Order is, we argue, an important – but overlooked – form of collective efficacy. Because of the constitutive character of such interaction order practices we argue that it has been a mistake to use standards that come from elsewhere to "measure" qualities of such neighborhoods and/or to believe that individuals growing up in such contexts are free to make choices about the rules they will follow.[5]

After a short discussion of Methods and Setting we go on to 1) describe the Contours of Time and Place that characterize the field setting, 2) Describe the identifying features of Drug Dealing Areas (Memorials Murals and Bystander Memorials), 3) Describe doing fieldwork on Lyford Street, 4) Describe the Code – or Interaction Order – of This Street, 5) Introduce the Corner Boys and their career path, 6) Consider the significance of Vacant lots, Playgrounds and public spaces, and 7) Discuss the idea of Drug Dealing as a local structuring order of social action on Lyford Street. Then we conclude with an elaboration of how the idea of constitutive interaction orders impacts on approaches to crime and justice.

Methods and Setting

The data in this article are based on ethnographic fieldwork in Bristol Hill over a period of four years (2005-2009). A small city near a major metropolitan area in the Northeast, Bristol Hill covers approximately 4 square miles. The block that is the focus of this study, the south half of Lyford Street, one of only two drug dealing sites in the city, is the lower half of a long U shaped street and only 340 feet long. It takes less than 60 seconds to walk from one end to the other. The row homes are densely packed together in two-story red-brick sets of twenty on each side. On one side of the street the homes are well kept –

[5] See Rawls 2009 for a discussion of constitutive orders of rule, Rawls 1987 for a discussion of Interaction Orders, and Rawls 2000 for a discussion of Interaction Orders of race.

this is where the residents and drug dealers live. On the other side of the same street they are largely vacant and neglected – this is where the drug dealers work.

We will sometimes refer to the neighborhood. This is an area some five blocks long and four blocks wide, bounded on two sides by the highway. The streets in the neighborhood create a natural boundary on the other two sides by winding back into the neighborhood. Thus, it forms a natural area with one main entrance and exit.

Housing for owners and renters' in the neighborhood, and in Bristol Hill proper falls into three categories: (a) about one fifth of the homes are owned by private home owners who live in their own homes; (b) the city, state, and county together own about two fifths of the homes, which are rented as subsidized housing; and (c) approximately two fifths are owned by individuals and rental companies who rent the properties to others. The average home value in Bristol Hill in 2004 (the year before this study began and the first for which data were available) was about $17,000 and the subsidized housing units (three bedrooms) rented for $400 a month.

Originally designed in the 1940's as a model middle class neighborhood, the neighborhood which contains Lyford Street, along with Bristol Hill proper, experienced a long period of decline after the mid 1960's that is typical of many cities with an early-twentieth century manufacturing base. Over time the city has become progressively more racially segregated and more isolated from the predominantly white and middle-class Saginaw County in which it is located, and which includes some of the wealthiest neighborhoods in the state. The city's population has been in a constant decline (until the last 4 years). At its height in 1950 there were 66,000 residents, as compared to 36,000 in 2004. In 2008 Bristol Hill's population grew to about 43,000 and remains predominately African American (75%) and Hispanic (18%).

The product of decades of economic and administrative failure, Bristol Hill is a struggling post-industrial city that has repeatedly tried to save itself without any measurable success in terms of local employment. In the 1940s, local factory owners recruited black workers from the South to augment their diminished wartime workforce. Since the end of the war however – and the return of the white workforce – unemployment has been a chronic problem. The official unemployment rate for Bristol

Hill was around 20% in 2004, and it has not been under 20% since 1980. Approximately 25% of the city's population lived below the poverty line in 2004.

Although many industries left the area as the infrastructure of the past gave way, the high unemployment rate cannot be explained in terms of a corresponding lack of jobs. New industries in the form of prisons, paper mills, hospitals, trash incinerators, weapons manufacturers, and casinos took their place. The jobs are there. But, the black male inhabitants of Bristol Hill have been consistently unsuccessful in securing those jobs. Their lack of success with employment is part of the story of Lyford Street.

The reasons for the failure of efforts to revive the economy and clean up the city point to a complex cycle of self-defeating obstacles. Because of depressed property values in Bristol Hill, the city government does not have the tax base to undertake needed economic improvements. Tax breaks were given to the new industries as an incentive to get them to relocate in Bristol Hill. The intent was to generate employment that would make a contribution to the economic health of the city. But these businesses have failed to deliver on their promise to hire local residents, citing the lack of "qualified" people living in the city. The tax breaks, however, continue. Depressed property values and decentralized control of industries by state and county officials have allowed these industries to flourish. Volunteer work with City Hall familiarized us with continuing efforts to encourage these industries to hire from the local community. However, these efforts remain unsuccessful.

There are also serious problems with education. In recent years, the Bristol Hill school system performed so poorly that in 2004 it was rated the worst in the state. Informants (who were themselves drug dealers) told us they dropped out of school because it was so violent they did not feel safe there. Accounts by the police – and from other sources – suggest that this is not an exaggeration. The four families living on the street which were notable for the success of their children all told us that they sent their children to school in suburbs outside of Bristol Hill. This required owning a car and sufficient resources in terms of time and money to keep the children busy and away from the street at various lessons, tutors and camps – resources that most families here do not command. Some families sent their daughters to local Catholic schools, but continued to send their sons to the public school. This finding accords with a strongly expressed local

feeling that girls require more supervision than boys – and a strong value placed by dealers and ordinary residents alike on the "virginity" and "purity" of daughters.

These beliefs and practices may have contributed to status inconsistencies that characterize neighborhood families. The families who talked with us all reported that the women in the family had higher educational status and earned more – and more regular – income than the men. In several higher status families the women had jobs with white collar corporate status while the men were only marginally employed as laborers. This disparity in the opportunities available for men and women is another important part of the story of Lyford Street.

The research opportunity emerged after one of the authors Waverly became involved in the legal defense of a drug dealer from Bristol Hill who became a key informant. We refer to him as Jonathan.[6] After a preliminary interview Jonathan's lawyers arranged an initial observation of Lyford Street, where he had grown up. The situation was compelling, and the practices of drug dealing so immediately available to observation that we realized an in depth observational study would be possible without gaining the confidence of working drug dealers. Moreover we quickly understood that what we were seeing challenged several important ideas. The "gangs" as the police referred to them, are not really gangs. The popular idea that the drug dealers and the community were separate entities – with the drug dealers preying on the community did not hold with the social relationships in Lyford. The dealers lived on the street and thus were in an important sense the "community" in question, while the buyers were almost all outsiders. And finally, the practices of drug dealing that we witnessed were so obviously orderly and not only that, provided a template of order for the whole neighborhood, that the popular idea of drug dealing as an agent of disorder was immediately challenged by even our first observations. Only if we associated the idea of "order" with a particular preconceived type of order could we find it to be missing here. Thus, explicating the idea that drug dealing was a source of order that structured interaction and thus the social life of the community, and exploring its implications became an objective.

[6] All names are pseudonyms.

In our analysis we concentrate on the insights of key informants in addition to field observations. This was particularly important as given the close character of the neighborhood, and the requirements for membership, we could never achieve insider status. For four years, one of the authors, **Waverly Duck**, conducted extensive fieldwork in the community, while the other, **Anne Rawls**, remained in close contact by phone during his periods in the field. Field observations took place in a number of different situations, public and private, over a period of four years, both accompanied and unaccompanied. Observations were made while walking and driving through the neighborhood, and while talking with residents, attending memorials, going to meetings and generally observing the details of social relations and practices on Lyford Street. Volunteer work with several community agencies, a day camp and city hall made participant observation possible and also led to the development of relationships with several key informants.

Three key informants were former drug dealers, and one was a current drug user. One was a police officer and three others were social workers and community activists. We also talked with hundreds of residents of Lyford Street, many of whom asked us into their homes.[7] Because of the strong lines drawn between insiders and outsiders in this neighborhood, just standing around was not possible, as we quickly learned. Many residents were interviewed, often in their homes, and some of these interviews were recorded. Relationships with many residents developed such that they would call or issue invitations to their homes without being asked. Strange and impromptu encounters occurred several times while observing drug dealing spaces that were unsettling but quite informative. Some symbolic aspects of drug dealing practices, such as memorial murals, strategically placed bits of trash and shoes hanging from electrical wires, were photographed.

[7] The word "we" is a grammatical device used here to smooth over the awkwardness of one researcher in the field and one collaborating by phone. Because of the difficulty of trying to write around this issue we sometimes use the first person We/I in discussing field observations, with the understanding that all actual observations were made by **Waverly Duck**, although **Anne Rawls** was sometimes actually on the phone with him while he was making the observations. At other times we refer to the fieldworker by name. The requirements of a blind review require removing names from the text at these points and we apologize for any difficulties in the text that result.

The objective of the ethnography is to bring to life the order properties of this particular urban drug dealing scene – as a social order in its own right – detailing the ways in which social events that appear senseless and disorderly from an outsider's perspective, are routinely seen as orderly, expected and predictable by insiders. There is much that hangs in the balance. Currently, more than half of the young black men who grow up in such neighborhoods end up by their early twenties in prison, jail, or dead (Wildeman 2009; Pager 2007; Pettit &Western 2004; Mauer 2006; *Bureau of Justice Statistics* 2003). Because of the outsider's inability to see the social organization that reproduces itself over and over again in such areas, and to see how it impacts on the lives of anyone who lives in such places, especially children, prevailing approaches to crime and deviance are not often helpful in understanding the situation.[8]

Contours of Time and Place

The neighborhood is one place by day and another at night. Weekdays at 5:00 PM everything seems to change. There is more traffic, more noise, and people walking everywhere. Outsiders leave. Patrol officers leave, as do the religious volunteers and social workers. Residents who work outside the neighborhood during the day return home. After the outsiders are gone, people from the neighborhood can be seen walking about until around midnight. While drug dealing occurs at all times of day, a denser stream of customers drive into the neighborhood between 5:00 PM and midnight. To get a sense of this flow of daily life, observations on Lyford Street were made at different times of the day and in different places. This made it possible to observe the dealers' shift

[8] Both authors had some familiarity with settings similar to the field setting, from both personal experience and prior research, and this was helpful in making sense of what was going on. When we presented an earlier version of this paper we were asked about the moral order of this community and to specify the values we brought to the research. A complete answer to this question would be long. However, we think it is important to point out that we make a distinction between a person's values and the constitutive requirements of a situation or interaction order that this question does not recognize. What we argue in the paper is that in spite of "decent" values the residents of Lyford Street must make use of the interaction order of the street as a sense-making tool. Values do not direct action. Similarly, our values as authors are not the key issue. Of course, if we believed that poor people living in urban neighborhoods were inherently bad or deviant, and that the neighborhood was inherently chaotic, we would not have been interested in a research opportunity that promised to show otherwise. But, beyond effecting our choice of research project our values are beside the point. What we have done is to show that the situated practices of the street overshadow the values in importance. Similarly, research on interaction orders is not directed by values and beliefs, but by the order properties of the phenomena observed.

changes, which were regular, and to watch them being resupplied with drugs. It also made it possible to watch residents leaving and returning home, to watch how they managed proximity to dealers, to monitor the influx and exit of visitors, and to see how time changed the social order of places and situations.

Lyford Street is located just off a major expressway, with an entrance to the highway right at the end of the street. The exit from the highway is at the other end of the neighborhood. This location facilitates drug dealing activities because buyers coming from wealthy surrounding suburbs have easy access. The so-called "drug corners" in the neighborhood are located in such a way that drug purchasers can get off the expressway, buy their drugs – while remaining in their cars – and return to the expressway quickly and easily. There is one drug dealing spot located at the entrance to the neighborhood (just after purchasers exist the expressway). But, the street it is on is not one suburban buyers could easily drive down and the distance back to the expressway is much farther. Located right next to the expressway on-ramp, a U shaped street with several escape routes for the dealers, Lyford Street was ideally situated: "prime" real estate. The location would not have been so important if the drug buyers lived in the neighborhood – but they were almost all from out of town and almost all white. For these middle class white buyers the location is a great advantage because they can stay safely in their cars and be out of the neighborhood are rarely caught. Law enforcement efforts concentrate on the dealers – although without the middle class white buyers there would be no dealers.[9]

While sitting in a car observing, dealers could be seen flagging down any cars that drove by slowly. Although the lighting on these streets is mostly from houses and car headlights (because the dealers shoot out the street lights or hire "maintenance" men to dismantle them which we witnessed on a number of occasions), white customers still tend to be very noticeable. The double stops required by the drug buy quickly became a familiar feature of the drug dealing routine. The first stop is to place an order with one dealer. The second stop is to pick up the drugs from a second dealer. The strategy of having a team of three dealers work each buy – only one member of which touched the

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[9] Police told us that earlier efforts to focus on the buyers were halted due to the complaint that they involved racially profiling the white buyers. One of the authors encountered this same problem doing research on policing in a police department near Detroit Michigan. The buyers there were also white and attempts to arrest them were also stopped due to complaints of racial profiling.

drugs – and then only a small amount for a few seconds – made it very difficult for the police to make many significant drug arrests.

Although this process could sometimes be observed while walking, it was a different experience from a car. Driving behind a car that was scouting for drugs could be a very slow process and the potential of this as a research technique was limited. Following a car as it slows down and makes the double stop; placing an order and then actually getting the drugs, could only be done a few times without raising the suspicion that dealers were being set up for a potential robbery or police sting. The slow pace is also a signal of customer status that dealers look for on the street. If we drove slowly they would approach us. Those who are lost might also get approached by dealers, especially when the drivers are white and/or in a situation in which the dealers are competing for business. While drug dealing is illegal, it is tied to the overall economy in essential ways. Competition between dealers increased during the economic downturn in the fall of 2008 and we actually saw dealers chasing after cars trying to get their business during that time. The requirement that the dealers all live on Lyford Street meant that dealers who worked the block only tolerated competition from other dealers who lived on the street.[10] But, the competition between them could nevertheless be quite fierce. Jonathan reported that stick-ups by other dealers working the same street were one of his biggest problems.

Identifying Features of Drug Dealing Areas

For anyone looking for drug dealing in this neighborhood several features identify the activities of the drug dealing spot. As one enters the drug dealing area they will see memorial murals, vacant lots, gym shoes hanging suspended from electrical wires (usually at corners – i.e., points of entry into the neighborhood), broken street lamps and strategically placed small piles of trash.

It has become popular to treat such features of poor urban neighborhoods as disorderly, of evidence of failures of collective efficacy and as an invitation to lawlessness. Memorial murals are described as graffiti and treated as vandalism. Vacant lots are treated as symptoms of neglect. The dangling gym shoes, and piles of trash, are

[10] We have been told that this is a rule – that only dealers who live on the street can work on the street. But, we don't know how the rule is enforced.

seen as uncollected litter – and treated as evidence of disorder and neglect – a lack of collective efficacy. Yet, on Lyford Street each of these phenomena has an orderliness embedded in its execution, and rather than being evidence of neglect, can be recognized as carefully crafted features and markers of drug dealing in this place. These practices, along with the drug dealing they mark and help to organize, may be responsive to failures of law enforcement and city government over time. But, they are also positive expressions of drug dealing practices, and in the case of "graffiti," often of community sentiment as well.

The more elaborate "graffiti" turn out to be murals memorializing the deaths of drug dealers, innocent bystanders, and/or valued members of the community whose deaths are related to drug dealing. Vacant lots turn out to be vacant due to the concerted efforts of upstanding citizens in the community who are hoping to curb the spread of drug dealing by having the houses that stood on the now vacant lots torn down. Thus, vacant lots are evidence of the responsiveness of city hall to the (however misguided) efforts of members of the community – a result of collective efficacy – not neglect. The gym shoes hanging from electrical wires are placed there to mark the boundaries of drug dealing areas – and buyers look for them. Trash also plays an important role in drug dealing – providing places to hide drugs and guns – and what may look like trash, but actually hides drugs, is constantly replenished.

While one might argue (as our police contact did) that the community would be better off if the city enforced property codes and removed graffiti, the benefits are debatable. Most houses are kept up fairly well, and neighbors help with cutting grass and cleaning trash when there is a problem. The worst residential properties are those where tenant turnover is frequent and the landlords do nothing to keep up the property. Fining landlords might work, but fines would be beyond the means of these tenants. Most of the unkempt properties are vacant lots in any case and owned by the city which does not keep them up. Trash on these sites serves as a cover for the drug dealers – who hide drugs there and they would just bring more trash for this purpose if the property was cleaned up. Furthermore, the memorial mural, as a special "sacred" type of graffiti, is a special case. "Cleaning" them up as if they were only "graffiti" would likely not be welcome. They are a valued representation of general community sentiment toward a deceased

person who is perceived to have been wrongfully killed and who has a significant number of mourners who continue to live and work in the area.

Memorial's to Drug Dealing Related Deaths

There are a number of sites where deaths have been memorialized through wall paintings, murals, or through collections of teddy bears, candles, cards and ribbons carefully arranged on and around telephone poles near the site where a death occurred. These memorials seem to be of basically two types. The murals for drug dealers tend to be relatively permanent (the oldest one of the four now visible commemorating a death from 2003), and also large and elaborate. Not every drug dealer who is killed gets one of these, however. They seem to indicate a measure of respect for the deceased. The smaller memorials around telephone poles and lampposts are temporary. They memorialize "innocent" bystanders and other valued members of the community who are killed by violence associated with drug dealing. Not every bystander who is killed gets one of these either – only if their death is felt to be unfortunate or underserved by a sufficient number of people. The authors saw only two bystander memorials during a period when at least four other people were killed by violence related to drug dealing – who were not celebrated with memorials.

Memorial Murals

The memorials for drug dealers are large – covering an area up to 12 by 8 feet – and are painted on the sides of houses. Not every drug dealer who is killed gets one. There are only five large murals memorializing the deaths of drug dealers from **2000 to 2009** and more than five drug dealers were killed during those **nine years**. The murals seem to be expressive of a feeling that a death was underserved and/or that the drug dealer was a person of value. During Jonathan's trial, when a youth from the neighborhood was asked by the prosecutor whether a particular mural was in honor of a particular drug dealer who had been killed, he answered "No one would ever paint a mural for that person" (and he was laughing in derision as he said it). During interviews Jonathan said that "assholes don't get murals."

The four memorial murals to drug dealers extant in the Lyford Street neighborhood in 2009 were all painted on houses next to vacant lots where the dealers

sell drugs. Four of the murals are located near the intersection of Lyford Street and the entrance to the highway. The fifth is on a house on the second drug dealing street three blocks away near the exit.

The murals have the aspect of attempting to right a wrong. They memorialize the feeling that the person should not have died. Like a grave headstone, the memorial murals show the date of birth and the date of death of the deceased. Four of he murals contain the letters RIP (rest in peace). Other messages such as: in memory of; we love you; real nigga's hold you down, and we miss you, also appear. Four of the murals are quite elaborate, colorful and well done. The artist signed and dated three of these murals with the year it was completed. The first mural, dated 2007, was completed three years after the person's death in 2004. The drug dealer memorialized was 25 years old. The second mural has no date of completion and is not signed. The drug dealer who it memorializes died in 2000 at the age of only 13. The third shows a black man as an angel rising up through flames. It is very colorful and was completed in 2008 and signed. The drug dealer who it memorialized was born in 1986 and died in 2008 at the age of 22. The fourth mural contains large elaborate letters with a peace symbol most prominent. It was completed and signed in 2009, but no date of death or date of birth for the dealer it memorializes is given. Those four murals are on Lyford Street, which is the most active drug dealing street, and closest to the expressway on ramp. The fifth and less elaborate mural is on the second drug dealing street which is at the entrance to the neighborhood from the expressway, but five blocks farther away from the expressway on ramp. That mural is in black and white rather than color and is relatively incomplete. The drug dealer it memorializes was killed in 2006 at the age of 23. The block lettering is not painted in and the letters are not lined up. There is also no signature and no date for the painting of the mural.

One could say that the four more elaborate murals are works of art – done by someone who understands the use of color and perspective. They are very pleasing to the eye. The other mural has all of the typical messages (such as date of birth and date of death, "rest in peace" or: "in memory of") – and is the same large size – but is not as decorative.

Bystander Memorials

The memorials for innocent bystanders are very different from those for drug dealers. They are temporary – and do not involve painting. These memorials are found decorating lampposts and telephone poles from the ground to eye level – wide with "offerings" at the bottom and narrowing as they grow upward. The first sight of one evoked the image of a Christmas tree. These innocent bystander memorials tend to be temporary (remaining for two weeks or less) – and are often quite elaborate. Flowers are placed around the base. Teddy bears – or favorite toys – candles, ribbons, cards and pictures of the victim are typical. Pictures of the victim – by contrast – are never found on memorials for drug dealers. Something like a candlelight vigil is held around these memorials until the candles go out (they seem to be replaced and relit for 3-4 days). It is our impression that the drug dealers may sponsor some of these memorials. We have seen them attending the vigils, lighting the candles and placing items on the memorial. The elaborate and expensive character of the displays also suggests that the drug dealers may be contributing to the cost. There are sometimes literally hundreds of toys in these memorials.

When studying the drug spots, and of course walking or driving through the neighborhood, the memorial murals and "Christmas trees" are a constant reminder of the potential for violent death. The murals are also constant reminders and markers of where drugs are sold. The police officer told me that while people in the neighborhood believe this is an appropriate way to mourn valued members of the community, she thinks it is a bad idea because it advertises how dangerous the neighborhood is and also lets people know where drugs are sold. The killings tend to happen where the person was selling drugs and the memorial murals each stand less than ten feet away from spots where drug dealing is in constant evidence. The murals also signify the danger of the job of drug dealing. And, given that most of the murders are not solved, the markers are even more deeply symbolic.

Doing Fieldwork on Lyford Street

On the first visit to Lyford Street Waverly was driven there by Jonathan's lawyer and a social worker who pointed out various points of interest, including the drug dealers,

and Jonathan's house. They had arranged an interview with his mother. At that point, understanding the context of Jonathan's life was the main objective. But, that quickly changed. Driving into the neighborhood from the nearby highway the drug dealers are the first thing we saw. It was amazing that they were so openly visible.

For the next year visits the neighborhood were unaccompanied and involved among other things, talking to people and explaining the research. Believing that social workers were a familiar sight and less likely to be killed than unidentified strangers, Waverly tried to dress like one: wearing khakis and a shirt with a collar, either long or short sleeved, depending on the weather. He often carried a legal pad, which, based on accounts from our initial informants, would support the impression that he was a social worker, or probation officer. All observations made while walking were completed before dark at a time of day when it would not have been odd to see such people in the field. He was once asked if he was a reporter, but never witnessed reporters in the field.

Although the entire neighborhood in which Lyford Street is located is only a little over a square quarter mile (five U shaped streets long), to walk the entire neighborhood block by block, from one end to the other, took about 45 minutes each time if there were no stops. The neighborhood consists of 747 houses in an area approximately four blocks by three. The streets wind around and don't conform to the idea of city blocks as much as to a closely built suburban development. While the streets on the periphery of the neighborhood tended to be densely populated, the more central blocks were not only sparsely populated but had numerous vacant homes, vacant lots and unkempt grass and overhanging trees. A major street separated the neighborhood into northern and southern sides, with more of the homes situated on the southern side. The drug dealing occurred only on the south side (because of the access it afforded to the expressway). But, dealers lived all along the street. Out of the estimated fifty plus different dealers who we were able to observe, we actually saw nine of them going to and from their homes on Lyford Street which were very close to where they dealt drugs.

Night visits to the street were always made in conjunction with an evening meeting that had been scheduled with a resident. These were appointments to visit people who worked during the day and therefore needed to be visited at night (they did not always show up). A car was always used for these visits and observations were made

from the car before and after the appointments. Walking observations were only made during daylight hours.

Walking and driving afforded two very different kinds of information. While walking, it was possible to meet people, stopping frequently for what some would call "small talk." If eye contact was made successfully and a greeting was offered, Waverly would usually hand out his business card, and ask if residents were willing to talk about the neighborhood. If the contact was successful they would be asked if he could call them later, or come by for a visit. Sometimes they would call him. In spite of the importance of our key informants, these more casual contacts made while walking produced a great deal of information.

These contacts with residents also facilitated participant observation in local social service agencies. The first summer a casual contact on the street suggested that the community day camp run by a local church would be a good place to get involved and Waverly volunteered there for eight weeks that first summer (and has continued his participation with various efforts at the day camp since). One of several workers at the day camp, who became informants, told us that there was a community outreach organization much closer to Lyford Street – in fact just at the end of the street, whose charge was to provide services in that neighborhood. After emailing them his CV, Waverly met with them the next day and explained the research. He subsequently worked as a volunteer, organizing community meetings and fundraisers for them for two years. That agency consisted of a police officer, a social worker and a volunteer secretary. The police officer wanted us to understand the social aspects of the community, and took Waverly to the houses of residents and also on patrol. The social worker – who grew up in the community wanted us to understand the history of the neighborhood and introduced Waverly to church leaders, politicians, and members of the local bureaucracy. A tour of the local prison was also arranged. The police officer and social worker became key informants.

In addition there were three other key informants who were – or had been – involved in drug careers. Fred was a 52 old year drug user who worked part time as a laborer and lived two blocks away from Lyford Street. Fred introduced Waverly around the neighborhood as "the professor" and introduced him to Dave, his drug dealer, who as

a successful older dealer became an important informant. Before he agreed to talk with us, Dave carefully read an early version of the paper and made very insightful and constructive comments. He was also introduced to a former pimp named Julius who like Dave only became an informant after carefully reading an earlier paper and questioning Waverly about it. Through these informants we were able to learn a great deal about aspects of the social organization of both drug dealing careers and daily life on Lyford Street.

There were also several interesting aspects of the ethnographic experience that are worth mentioning. Because he was perceived as a Black man who had succeeded in the "outside world" the residents of Lyford Street were often as interested in Waverly as he was in them. People he met on the street invited him to their houses, into their relative's houses, and introduced him to their friends. They fed him and invited him to church, and they tried to fix him up on dates with their daughters and friends. They called him on the phone and asked him for advice about jobs, how to write a CV and about schooling their children. They wanted to know about his own personal journey from a poor urban black neighborhood – very like their own – to **Yale**. In an important sense they were treating him as a resource for understanding the world outside their own community – just as he was treating them as resources for understanding the social order of Lyford Street.

Another interesting experience as researchers in such a setting was being "Googled" in the field. Having handed out his card to people in the neighborhood, Waverly found that they looked him up on the internet. Dave and Julius both Googled Waverly before they would agree to be interviewed by him. They also asked to read his work before they would agree to talk. He was also Googled by a group of missionaries who were approached for information about a group of teenagers from the neighborhood who they worked with.

The Code – or Interaction Order – of This Street

It might seem to be a trivial point that residents must master the code of this street. But, it is really a matter of life and death. Residents of a neighborhood in which drug dealing is a prevalent activity must be able to enter and leave safely. On Lyford Street most residents do not have cars – so they must be able to walk safely down streets on which

drug dealers are working. To do this it is necessary for residents to become competent in the practices that order the activities of drug dealing and buying.

Ordinary citizens who walk down the street on the way home must be able to interpret signs of trouble – and be able to signal to the drug dealers that they are not trouble. They must be able to interpret gaze, walk, dress and other elements of the code (Anderson 1999). The drug dealers and residents are not worlds apart. In fact, the dealers in this neighborhood are themselves residents of the street, their spots are prominently placed on the street, and their proximity requires of everyone that they understand one another.

Learning to walk in a way that says "you can ignore me I am not a threat" is a survival practice – not a moral choice.[11] This involves eye contact avoidance and not standing around near where dealers are working. Most people who live in communities where drug dealing is extensive would, under other circumstances, not engage in interaction with drug dealers. But, given their proximity, the people living in this community have to engage the dealers, whether in just passing them on the street, giving information to the dealer or to law enforcement, or simply warning their children about the dangers of becoming a dealer. In this neighborhood context, drug dealing is a daily reality. For most children growing up here it is their primary reality – and the children need to know about it to stay alive. Therefore, while most people who live in this neighborhood do not engage in either selling drugs, or using them, their public interactions must orient toward the expectation of drug dealing activity, and the potential outcomes and consequences for themselves and their children.

In exploring the social order of the neighborhood as a process, we apply Anderson's idea of a "code," but in doing so we also follow Garfinkel in treating

[11] Retaliation is real. Wright and Jacobs (2006) identified six types of street justice retaliation: Reflexive, Calculated, Deferred, Reflexively Displaced, Sneaky, Imperfect. According to Wright and Jacobs (2006:46) immediate reprisal that involves face-to-face contact with the violator is called "reflexive" retaliation; Immediate reprisal that involves no face-to-face contact is called "reflexively displaced" retaliation; When retaliation is delayed, an added contingency is introduced - whether or not the delay is desired by the retaliating party; This permits four additional possibilities: Face-to-face retaliation where delayed is desired is called "calculated" retaliation; Face-to-face retaliation where delay is not desired is called "deferred" retaliation; Retaliation without face-to-face contact where delay is desired is called "sneaky" retaliation; Retaliation without face-to-face contact where delay is not desired is called "imperfect" retaliation.

practices as basic sense-making processes involved whenever neighborhood inhabitants participate in performing and making sense of that code. Anderson explains the code as a byproduct of structural issues like decline and unemployment, which it certainly is. We extend the analysis, arguing that an Interaction Order of some sort is *always* necessary, and examining the utility of this code in particular to the work practices of drug dealing and to the people who must use it to make sense in – and of – situations related to that work. Children, for instance, must be able to identify the boundaries of drug dealing areas, to know who the drug dealers are, and when they are working. Situated features of identity and practice are key factors in this regard. A smart child will also have assessed the relative danger to themselves of individual dealers – an assessment of identity performance and trustworthiness – and will have taken steps to avoid the more dangerous ones. This is a lot of knowledge.

We focus on the situated contexts and interactional moves involved in things like "selling drugs" and "code switching," but also in something as simple as just walking down the street past a drug dealer: treating these as situated interactional accomplishments which comprise orderliness in this neighborhood. We treat identity as having a situated dimension – just as the code has situated relevance. Of course, the social identities possible in this community are directly responsive to drug dealing in a context of economic decline compounded by violence. Most middle class identities are just not available here. However, managing and performing social identity is always a situation specific process and knowing what the available identities are does not explain *how*, *when*, and *where* people achieve them.

We focus on identity as a process of sensemaking which is responsive moment by moment to changing situated contexts. Both the code – or local interaction order practices – and the available identities are responsive in this way. Additionally, people in this neighborhood perform many different identities and these change according to the situations in which they find themselves in subtle ways. There are drug dealing and non-dealing identities that are all part of the same order of sense-making. People (on Lyford Street women) who work in corporate America by day must return and walk down this street past drug dealers at night. The irony and difficulty, in doing an ethnography of such practices and how they are mastered in this high risk context, is that mistakes often

furnish the clues researchers need, but the people who get this process wrong on Lyford Street don't usually live to tell about it.

"Corner Boys"

All of the dealers who sell drugs in Bristol Hill are known as "Corner Boys." While they also work from vacant lots along the street that are not corners, the corners of the street are prominent drug dealing spots. The dealers need to be easily visible to buyers driving in from the expressway – but drivers also need to be able to exit quickly after a purchase and the dealers themselves need to be able to disappear quickly if the police show up. Although dealers sometimes worked around the clock, the most action occurred between eight in the morning and midnight. These hours were roughly divided into three shifts. Which shift they work distinguishes dealers by rank and status. Usually younger dealers with low status work the morning and early afternoon shifts, while older dealers work the evening and night shifts.

On a single shift two or three dealers work a spot together. There may be several such groups of three working the block at one time. The first is an order taker and money collector. He identifies the buyer and takes a drug order the car and then communicates the drug order and pick up location (by text, bird call, whistle etc.) to a second member of the team. This second person then retrieves the drugs, which are usually stashed in small amounts throughout the block – under bits of trash, under rocks, etc. They get out only the amount of drugs required for that purchase and deliver them directly to the customer at the location given them by the order taker. The order taker and drug deliverer are usually in close enough proximity to see one another and typically the order taker will send the customer (still in their car) toward the drug deliverer. If surveillance becomes a problem then the process can get more complicated. For instance the buyer could be directed to a more obscure pick-up spot, or be told to return (or show up somewhere else) at a specified time. The third person is a lookout – constantly circling the block looking for police or customers. It is harder to be certain of this third person, but informants tell us that they are almost always there. Certain children and teenagers also walked around the neighborhood watching out for customers and law enforcement for the dealers. They would be rewarded in small ways.

Although dealers usually dressed extremely well and in the latest fashion when they were not dealing drugs, they dress in something like a uniform while they are dealing. They have a summer and a winter uniform. In the summer they dressed alike in white tee shirts and tank tops and dark pants or shorts with similar haircuts. In the winter they wore black "dickey" work pants (black "carpenter" pants) and black "hoodies" (sweatshirts with hoods). While this practice marked them as drug dealers, it also made it very difficult for the police to distinguish the dealers from each other. They all look alike. So, for instance in a chase, the police might start out chasing one dealer and end up with someone else. Since they choose locations with many escape routes and poor lighting the advantage goes to the dealers in such cases. Since only one of the three would ever be holding drugs – if they could make a switch the police would not catch them with anything.

There were top dealers who supplied all the Corner Boys who we were sometimes able to observe. They usually remained mobile, circling the block during the day, and resupplying drugs when dealers ran low. They did not carry the drugs with them – but directed dealers to locations where drugs were hidden. Most of the drugs were stored in vacant houses, under cars, and in bags that resembled trash. Not having drugs stored in their apartments or cars – or on their person – hedged against stickups as well as arrests. Since the quantities at each location were small – even if some were found – or a dealer was caught, the small amount would limit the loss and, at least theoretically, limit the punishment.

Guns were considered an important tool – but the penalty for being caught with one made them too dangerous to carry while working. So, they worked the guns the same way they did the drugs. Most of the dealers on the corner shared guns which were hidden close by, either under a car, a rock, or garbage can, but never kept them on their person while working in case they got caught. The practice of storing drugs and guns in public places which the kids in the neighborhood could see them using – further bound the kids to the drug dealer's code. Protecting such public spaces from predatory outsiders is essential.

The path to becoming a drug dealer which Jonathan described to us is typical of how children on Lyford Street are systematically socialized into the drug trade at a very

young age. The progression goes something like this: the child starts as a look-out kid (ages 7–11), then becomes a drug holder (ages 12-13), and then a drug seller (age 14 and up). The progression from neighborhood kid to look-out kid (or look-out kid to drug holder) is often involuntary, and sometimes involve being pressed into use as a sacrifice by the older boys. This typically involves a stint in juvenile hall or time on probation.

Jonathan began his association with drug dealing at the age of eight when he earned change going to the store to do errands for a dealer. This is a task that all of the younger children compete for – because they are allowed to "keep the change." Sometimes they would also be asked to keep a lookout for law enforcement and/or potential customers. On average three to four teams of dealers "work" the block at one time. Although a child might know all of the dealers, typically a child would be associated with only one of them – although they might on occasion be asked to run errands for any of them. That dealer would begin by having "their" children run errands to the corner store when they were walking to or from school or playing in the neighborhood. In return the children could keep the change or buy candy, soda pop, or potato chips. Later they might move up to the bigger job of drug holder – if they proved reliable. Reliability is very important. The very real possibility of falling out of favor with a dealer would limit their ability to run errands for any of them, or even to walk down the street, as the dealers controlled the corners which the children need to pass by everyday.

According to Jonathan's mother Lynn, it was a common practice for drug dealers to use children to "hold" drugs when the police were threatening them; this practice was based on the premise that "kiddie time," where juveniles are treated differently from adults in terms of punishment and time sentenced, is better to risk than "adult time." The difference in treatment between adult and juvenile offenders, and the practice of treating any 16 year old with a record as an adult, has contributed to this practice. Older dealers – that is, older than 16 – coax a steady supply of young, inexpensive, and easily manipulated young boys into working around them so that they can be used as "decoys" if the police arrive. Adults living in the neighborhood understand this – but most feel that there is nothing they can do about it. The "kids" are caught in the web of these circumstances. For them the first arrest may be "kiddie time," but it is also the beginning

of an arrest record and has the obvious consequence of socializing children into beginning drug dealing careers.

The Youngest Drug Dealers – Eleven to Sixteen: The Day Shifts

Early morning observations between 8 AM and 10 AM were the easiest and our favorite ones. While it was the slowest drug dealing time, observations at this time allowed us to see kids go off to school, to see people go to work, and to witness the arrival of people who worked in the neighborhood (e.g., trash collectors, water maintenance, electricians, social workers). It was also an ideal time for Waverly to hand out his card. It was a favorite time of day because it seemed like the quiet before the storm when drug traffic began to pick up in the afternoon. Also the early morning drug dealers tended to be the youngest and the least threatening. It was interesting to watch them work. They didn't bother us, and we didn't bother them. According to our informants, morning is the worst time to be out selling drugs. There are fewer drug buyers, no cover and no younger helpers. The shift is consequently left to the youngest dealers. We wondered why they weren't in school.

One of these younger dealers helped Waverly once when he was taking pictures of memorial murals. The young dealer moved out of the way so that he could get a better view of the murals and then pointed out where other murals were located so that he could take pictures of them. His actions communicated a pride in the murals. When out of the dealers' view, or when they took breaks, field notes could be written. It is only the youngest dealers who need to take breaks because the children are in school until 3:00 and until that time they don't have anyone to run errands for them. During these breaks the corner was left unoccupied for ten or fifteen minutes at a time. When they were away on breaks pictures were also taken of the spots where they worked.

Although the younger dealers never bothered Waverly, he tried to walk around the neighborhood in such a way that he could make observations without being noticed by the dealers. He was especially careful not to do anything that would draw the attention of the more powerful dealers and suppliers (usually driving by in cars). On some streets he slowed his pace, on others he hurried. In accord with the "Code" of the street, he never made direct eye contact with dealers, even when they were being helpful (as with

the photo incident), and on the few occasions where they did cross paths, he spoke only when spoken too. Sometimes he would walk past young boys on bikes who were working as lookouts for older dealers; sometimes they would be accompanied by the older dealers. Whether out of ritual or curiosity the older dealers would sometimes greet him and he would then return their greetings.

The dealers working the afternoon shift are a little older and more trusted by the suppliers and older dealers than the dealers on the morning shift. Afternoon is also a time when young children are around in large numbers. Thus, it will be this shift of dealers with which children first form attachments. It is the afternoon and early evening dealers who the children run errands for, and for whom they perform the service of being lookout kids.

This is an interesting time of day in terms of the contingencies involved and how they are managed. The pace of selling drugs has picked up – but because it is still daylight the dealers are working in full view of anyone who cares to watch. In terms of arrest it is a dangerous time. Older dealers who do work this shift might do so in the role of order taker – without coming into contact with drugs at any time. The children play an important protective role here, both as lookouts and as protective cover, and they are available to hold drugs for older dealers being chased by the police.

Old Heads: The Night Shift

After a few years if young dealers have proved themselves they can earn the opportunity to work the top spots as night time dealers. When this happens they become known as Old Heads. They are no longer juveniles – and if caught they serve adult time. They also have to take on greater risks. They are working after dark, which gives them some cover from the police. But, they are also more likely to have prior records and will draw long sentences if caught. They are making more money and are therefore much more likely to become the targets of stick-ups.

The risks have increased enormously for dealers as they progress up the career ladder and their precautions have increased accordingly. We were not able to make extended observations at night – it was too dangerous. From the observations we did make we could see that the same teamwork that characterized the daytime shifts was in

evidence at night with the older dealers. We were also able to watch and sometimes to follow buyers as they progressed through the two part sale and pick up at night. But, standing around and watching the older dealers work at night was not safe and most of our information about them comes from informants.

Jonathan told us that as he started to become a successful dealer he also became a target of stick-ups as the other Old Heads became envious of him. He said that because he and one other young dealer were the best hustlers on the street, the other dealers – all competing for the same customers – became envious. It was the stick-ups that Jonathan feared the most. Because the dealers worked in small groups of 3, and were not organized into gangs, any other small group working on Lyford Street was a competing group.

Groups of Old Heads were known to take drugs and money by brute force. At times, we have been told, they would stick someone up and torture their victim until he revealed where his major stash was located. Since the location of the stash was secret and yet in a public place away from their own location there was never anyone guarding it. Jonathan tells a story of how a prominent Old Head, who worked as a bus driver and sold cocaine on the side, once offered to show him the ropes. The Old Head picked Jonathan up and took him to a house in an expensive neighborhood, which he pretended was his. Standing at the door of the house without going in, the Old Head explained the rules of the drug game and how to turn a major profit, assuring Jonathan that he too could have a house like that. While this Old Head was winning Jonathan's trust, Jonathan volunteered information such as how much "weight" he was moving, where he kept his stash, and how much money he made a month. Jonathan later found out that this particular Old Head, whom he had known for most of his life, was setting him up to get robbed.[12]

The proliferation of guns is in part due to the extreme danger and high turnover rate (arrest/death) of drug dealers. Guns are used to protect a dealer's drug supply from stick-ups and also from addicted clients. Guns are also used by dealers in an effort to make their families safer. They are used to collect payments from customers who don't pay when given drugs on credit, or to punish an addict or rival dealer who steals drugs

[12] See also the account by Bruce Jacobs in *Robbing Drug Dealers* – Aldine Press. The market has a cyclical and retaliatory element to it. The development of gang structures makes this more efficient and reduces the waste from competition. That also means that the competition on Lyford Street is more evidence that they are not organized as gangs – but as small groups of independent entrepreneurs .

from a stash spot. Pistol whipping addicts and customers, for stealing or for failed payment, is a common practice. A drug dealer who does not protect his "face" in this way will not last long.

Buying and exchanging guns is relatively easy for those involved in the drug trade. Because the guns are not kept on their person, however, but must be hidden nearby and shared with other dealers, anyone wanting to use a gun must first test it to see if it is still loaded and whether or not the bullets will fire. Testing guns to see if they work, and firing guns in the air to elicit fear, accounts for most of the gun shots one hears in this neighborhood. There are other noises that resemble gun shots, such as car backfires, tire blow outs, and even rock throwing, but the firing of guns is frequent and usually the sounds come from guns that are being test fired.

Vacant Lots and Playgrounds

There is an important distinction to be made between public space and open space in Bristol Hill and in the neighborhood around Lyford Street. Although it seems to be a widespread belief that drug dealing occurred in public spaces like parks making them unsafe, and we were frequently told this, we never observed drug dealing in any of those public spaces. According to our informants drugs were not dealt in those places. Indeed these public spaces were all in the wrong location for drug dealing. Open space that is strategically located (with easy access to the expressway and many escape routes) is where drug dealing occurs – not public space – which is usually fenced in and often centrally located.

Spaces designated for public use in this neighborhood are, in any case, extremely limited. But, the amount of open space is immense due to the systematic demolition of parks and abandoned houses by the City. There are three public parks in the City as a whole – but no parks remain in or near the neighborhood around Lyford Street. The last remaining playground in the neighborhood – which was also the last remaining playground in the City – was demolished[13] in 2008 while the fieldwork for this study was being done. There are also a number of private, locked and gated playgrounds in the City

[13] There are two accounts about why the playground was demolished. Initially, the cop saw it as dangerous and an eye sour. The city produced a report that stated that the playground was demolished due to safety reasons such as bad lighting.

attached to churches, schools, hospitals, and homeless shelters – but none of those are in the neighborhood.

The Last Playground

This nameless playground used to occupy a space several blocks away from the main street where drugs are sold. Where it stood there is now a vacant lot covered with weeds and trash. The playground lot stood at the entrance to the neighborhood near the first corner where drugs were sold. But, even though it was not far away from a drug dealing spot it was never a location for drug dealing. It was surrounded on three sides by a high fence, behind which stand houses with their backs to the playground. The fourth side – with houses at just one end – faces a road which is separated by an open space from the service drive from the highway. There was only one gate through the fencing – and to reach the playground a car leaving the highway would have to drive deep into a dark and uninhabited part of the neighborhood – likely not appearing to white suburban buyers.

Positioned as it is, facing the sides of several houses on the service drive, and separated from the backyards on the other sides, the playground was unfortunately as badly situated for use by children as it was for drug dealing. Parents in the neighborhood were reluctant to allow their children to play there – even though the playground was well equipped – because they could not see them out of their front windows – or get to the playground through their yards. The playground was noticeable because there were never any children using it. The playground was observed more than a dozen times on weekends and in the late afternoon, during times when children were out of school, but there were never any children there. Our informants told us that there never were. Only on one occasion – after dark – were three or four adults observed sitting together and talking in the playground. There was never any lighting at the playground, which made it virtually impossible to see anything in the park after dark.

The playground lot was approximately 700 sq. ft – a small playground. There was a play structure made of wood, metal and plastic. It consisted of three units joined together by catwalks, one with monkey bars above it. The catwalk was made of mesh, metal and wood, 3 feet of mesh metal leading to a 2 foot wooden paneled deck that sat less than 1foot off the ground. The monkey bars extended approximately three feet above

the catwalk. A ladder attached to the catwalk led to a deck about 4 feet from the ground with a curved ladder that also served as monkey bars on one side and a vertical wooden ladder on the other.

The high quality of the equipment raises again the question why the park was not used – even by adults. It was somewhat dirty – but if it had been used the neighbors would likely have cleaned it up as they do other neighborhood spaces. Graffiti on the playground equipment was covered with white paint which had obviously been there a long time, which suggests that the park had been cleaned at least once. The grass was overgrown in places with trash consisting of newspapers, paper/plastic cups, and broken glass throughout the space. There was a bench with a mesh metal back and a wooden panel for sitting. But, one of the two panels from the bench had been removed. It could easily have been cleaned and repaired.

Because the neighborhood children not allowed to go to the park they were forced to play on the streets where drug dealers did work. We were told that their parents preferred this because at least they could look out of their windows and see their children playing in the yards and on the street in front of their houses and they would not have been able to see their children if they went to the park. The backs of their houses were also separated from the park by a high fence – making it impossible for the children to move quickly between their houses and the park. The street – even though the drug dealers worked on it – was in many ways considered safer for children than the park. However, not all children were allowed to play anywhere unsupervised. One woman who was interviewed reported that when she and her brother were children growing up in this neighborhood they were not even allowed to go out into their own yard, let alone the park, without adult supervision.

During the summer of 2008 the park was demolished. A city worker claimed that the park was unfit for children to play in. He did not live in this community. Yet he was able to call and get the park put on a demolition list. Less than a week later the park was gone. When asked why he had the park torn down he said it was not because of the play structure – which was safe – but rather because of the "negative element" that he claimed went to the playground. When pressed, the City worker said the park had become a "haven for drugs, murderers and dead bodies." What is amazing about this account is

that most of the murders which occurred in this neighborhood took place near vacant lots, like the one he had just created. None had occurred in the playground – and no one had been observed selling drugs in it. Three weeks after the demolition of the park, the city received a grant to build a new playground; but it will not be built in the same neighborhood.

This same account of "drugs, murderers and dead bodies" was used as a justification for demolishing bus shelters in this neighborhood. This was done just before the playground was demolished. The playground was the last public space except for the sidewalk in this neighborhood. Observing this process provided some insight into how other public spaces in Bristol Hill had been dismantled over time.

The irony is that this systematic effort to eliminate public spaces to prevent interaction with drug dealers has had the direct consequence of forcing people to interact more on the street in the neighborhood – where the drug dealers are active. More people use their front porches and back yards instead of public spaces.

The houses are closely packed and most people have to walk past them because very few people own cars. Ironically the practice of dismantling and demolishing public space has created many vacant lots, which are unkempt with over grown grass, all of which people must walk by. Because public spaces are gone there is more interaction in open spaces with anyone who happens to be there. It also creates open spaces for drug dealing – and vacant lots have become markers for the drug trade. The vacant lots create a situation that is ripe for the disposal of dead bodies. Ironically, demonstrable collective efficacy did not improve the neighborhood.

Drug Dealing as a Constitutive Local Structuring Order of Social Action

The fate of a neighborhood and its locality over time can be largely dependent on whether there is an underground economy entrenched in that neighborhood space and if so, how and to what extent, it structures the social order properties of the daily life interactions and practices of residents. The local interaction order that results will impact on the identities, social objects and actions that can be intelligibly and safely enacted in that neighborhood space. Certainly the availability of jobs, the quality of education and the existence of supportive social institutions matter a great deal – and may indirectly

determine features of the interaction order that develops. But, the influence is indirect. When ties to the mainstream economy fail, an underground economy often becomes the default option. In contexts where supportive structures have failed, jobs are not available and an illegal economy *has* developed, then the needs and practices of that underground economy will shape in significant ways the interaction order properties of the daily activities that define social action in that space.

The resulting interaction order is not a culture of poverty. It is a social order of work and the worksite practices of illegal careers that – because the neighborhood is the worksite – spills over into a neighborhood space. This can occur anyplace in which an underground economy takes root: a rich neighborhood or a poor one. But, it is much more likely to occur in places where employment opportunities and physical and social mobility are severely curtailed. It is also more likely to occur where privacy is not available and work must be done in public. The intersection of an underground economy with a neighborhood as a whole reaches a critical point when the people who live there – people with "decent" aspirations and their children – cannot ignore the local order demands of the underground economy in daily interaction and therefore, don't have choices about whether to participate in the situated practices surrounding drug dealing as they relate to that space.

In such cases an underground economy, such as drug dealing, sex work, smuggling etc., can become a powerful local social force. Given this understanding, the lenient attitude of even ordinary residents of Lyford Street toward aspects of drug dealing – and their willingness to benefit from it – has elements that should be considered rational. Many people ask why they don't leave. But, this is where they grew up. It is the interaction order they know – the one in which their identities and stable ways of proceeding through everyday life have their foundation. They would likely feel that other places are strange – and that the order there was unreliable. According to their own local order practices it would be.

The strength of commitment and level of participation in the drug trade exhibited by residents of the Lyford Street neighborhood likely rests on a combination of their embeddedness in the local order and their daily dependence on that order for a shared sense of the concrete and taken for granted character of social objects and actions,

reinforced by a consistent lack of opportunity over time. In other words, while the involvement of children in the local order practices of drug dealing may be a direct result of their familiarity with and proximity to the local order of drug dealing, the continued commitment of such people as adults will be reinforced by structural conditions that result in their inability to secure other means of employment. That is, their understanding of a series of external factors such as the availability of jobs, the quality of education, property values, savings, and public safety will strengthen their already strong commitment to place. The fact that growing up in this neighborhood leads to a high probability that their early activities result in arrest records, factors negatively into the employment process. So does the generally poor level of education. Whether or not they can get a legitimate job also will impact on whether people *believe* that they have a vested interest in the future or are merely surviving in the moment. By contrast, the lost cost of housing will contribute positively to their commitment to the neighborhood. All of these things reinforce commitment to the place and its local interaction order.

Tragically, the situation on Lyford Street is symptomatic of the continued decline of American inner cities, and its residents can be counted among the innumerable men and women who face the imminent possibility of an early death or incarceration. The consequences are especially dire for those who aspire to become self-sufficient in the legitimate economy, but do not have the tools and/or opportunity needed to achieve this goal. Deindustrialization and the shift to a lower paying, service oriented economy have left very few economic choices for the urban poor and the poorly educated, especially young men who want to succeed but lack the necessary resources (Wilson 1987) or even a basic understanding of how to proceed (**Duck and Rawls – life**). In an environment in which success cannot be performed through legitimate achievement, and particularly in the context of the predominant street culture, success as a man (masculinity) must be performed in other ways. This may push men toward the underground economy and/or take the form of destructive acts of sexuality and/or violence (Duck 2009).

Legal experts sometimes argue that there are many young people who grew up in such circumstances who have never committed a crime involving the sale or use of drugs and who certainly have never been associated with violent crime or murder. This suggests that those who do become involved have choices available to them that they are failing to

exercise. While this may be true of some very small percentage of any population, it is close to impossible for a young boy from Lyford Street to avoid participation in the local social order of his street. The few families that were pointed out to us as exceptions – whose children were successful – all told us that they had effectively physically removed their children from the street from an early age: sending them away to school, renting apartments in other towns for the purpose, and in many other ways keeping their children occupied away from the street. These successful children did not play on Lyford Street, or make friends with the other children who lived there. This required both money and cars. It did work and those children received college scholarships when they grew up. But, in effect, in a very significant sense these successful children did not really grow up on Lyford Street. Those whose families did not have the required level of resources – and that is most families on the street – never had any possibility of competing for those scholarships. We expect this is the case for most "exceptions."

While participants in orderly social settings can exercise some choices over the actions they perform – the social situation and its expectations frame these choices. Once in a context of constitutive practices people have very little choice over the *set of practices* they engage in. The idea that there is a Code of the street (Anderson 1999), or Interaction Order (Goffman 1983), and a corresponding set of constitutive background expectancies (Garfinkel 1967) – that organize significant social interaction in a neighborhood, is important for understanding what happens to children who grow up there. Interpreting actions that take place in neighborhoods like the one around Lyford Street out of context and analyzing them as if they had occurred elsewhere is a huge theoretical and methodological mistake. The practices that organize the situations where people work and live define the meaning of the actions, and the identities and social objects that are possible in those spaces. A participant must "play by the rules," whether they like them or not, as long as they want to make sense in this context. The alternative is to change jobs or move – options that children do not have (for very few Lyford Street parents is this a real option either). To avoid the street it would be necessary for a young boy to stay in the house most of the time – and to be accompanied by an adult every time he walked down the street – to avoid contact with drug dealers. Even then he would have to be familiar with the code of the street just to accompany his parent safely on a walk

down that street. Under such conditions the idea that a child "chooses" to be involved in crime and deviance loses its meaning, and unless the question is approached differently, it is inevitable that the desperate conditions we describe will continue to produce an endless supply of young black men to fill our prisons.

Focusing on *how* the local situated character of the social orders that comprise daily life comes to frame the availability of choices and resources, and *how* "the situation" and a person's location in that situation can come to supersede and shape personal feelings and attitudes, is an important corrective to the idea that individuals choose their situations; Or, that their attitudes and values shape those situations. While classic ethnographies such as Gerald Suttles' *Social Order of the Slum,* (1968) and interpretive ethnographies such as Howard Becker's *Outsider,* (1973), along with Goffman's *Presentation of Self,* (1959) and *Stigma* (1963) set the stage for an examination of the presentational aspects of face-work on the disadvantaged street corner. There is still a tendency to emphasize individual values, attitudes, etc.

Studies that focus on interpretive, memoir, or personal accounts, while they may be rich in detail, often place an emphasis on how an individual subject came to be in the social situation they find themselves in and how they feel about being there. A focus on the constitutive social order properties of the social situation – and the way in which all who find themselves in that situation are held accountable to them – is also essential. *Code of the Street* and *Streetwise* provide a blueprint for reframing the social order aspects of these classic and contemporary ethnographies from the Chicago School to focus on local orders rather than persons.

Once in a situation people must make choices from *within* the framework of the local social order in order to survive.[14] The idea of a "constitutive practice" that can be developed from the work of Goffman and Garfinkel completes the transition (Rawls 2009). "Choosing" to play baseball when the game is football, for instance, is not a viable option and would certainly not be considered either meaningful or rational. Rational choice considerations applied to moves made *within* situated practices are relevant only

[14] Groups of Black Muslims who have recently moved into the neighborhood are an exception that proves the rule. Members of this community dress distinctively, walk together in groups, and generally make it clear that they want no contact with anyone outside of their group. But, they also stay off of the street after five o'clock, avoid certain areas, and in other ways observe the rules of the street.

to moves defined by that practices which are oriented toward objectives also defined by that practice (Rawls 2009).

We also suggest that the constitutive order practices found on Lyford Street are more closely circumscribing that many local orders. They offer less leeway for deviation. There is a serious sense in which the local order practices of Lyford Street are more like the fine tuned worksite practices like those of doctors, factory workers or scientists: But, with a twist. In so far as all residents of the neighborhood become involved in these practices as ways of navigating their space and signaling their identities and intentions, they play a larger role in the life of the neighborhood than technical work practices usually do. Normally, a person can expect to leave their work practices at work when they go home. On Lyford Street, by contrast, we find an expansion in the scope of a closely circumscribed set of practices with a very limited locale of relevance. The interpenetration of practices related to the work of Welsh miners with the daily lives of residents living in a mining town as described by George Orwell might offer a better comparison (Orwell, 1936**.** There is also a similar sense of the "outside" world being against them.

We argue that this tight framing of the possibilities for daily interaction leads to another phenomenon that characterizes Lyford Street and places like it – a deep contradiction between the beliefs they hold and the practices they engage in. Because practices rather than beliefs drive the orderliness of social action – there is always some difference between beliefs and practices in any situation in which practices are constitutive of action – constraining the relevance of belief and individual choice (Rawls 2007fr, 2008, 2009). However, there is usually some relationship between the two. On Lyford Street we found an extreme form of the contradiction. Because the practices that so closely circumscribe daily interaction support an illegal activity which contradicts deeply help values of residents, they have no opportunity to act on their values. But, they hold onto them nevertheless.

Anderson noted this contradiction between what people say and what they do. He points out that people retain "decent" values in social contexts in which there is little possibility of acting on those values (Anderson 2002, 1999). What they say and what they do will not be the same. We argue that the contradiction between belief and practice is

situationally driven (Rawls 2009). It does not reflect on the moral character of individuals. That beliefs that accord with practices in one situation will conflict with the practices required in another is a simple matter of fact. Success in enacting a practice requires producing practices in detail, regardless of values. Not being able to act on a value does not change the value. But it means that values are not *driving* action in such contexts. This means that "attitude" studies based on what people say are almost always misleading with regard to their situated practices. What is "normal" practice with regard to dealing with drugs and violence on Lyford Street – conflicts with what almost everyone in the neighborhood believes. Even the drug dealers themselves hold many middle class values and aspire to middle class outcomes. What people actually do, on the other hand, is a situated matter on acting within the constitutive context of a local interaction order. Therefore, understanding why people do what they do requires understanding the social order of a place: *what* people actually do, and *where*, and *when* – and seeing *how* "in context" what they do makes sense and accords with the local order – even though it may conflict with their expressed beliefs.

This contradiction between beliefs and practices is not the only inconsistency that people in this neighborhood face. There is a deeper inconsistency that characterizes the Interaction Order itself and relates to its worksite character. The Interaction order is very closely circumscribed and yet there are gaps in the order it produces. While we have argued that aspects of "the street" – such as drug dealing – have an order character and a code of understanding, and that competence is required to navigate through such spaces safely, it is also clear that the order produced cannot always be counted on. The frequency of situations (or incidents) not provided for by the local interaction order creates a level of unpredictability that does not characterize most Interaction Orders and which remains a constant.[15] That is, residents must assume that such incidents – breaks in order – will continue to arise. Their unpredictability is itself predictable. With the ever-present possibility of police raids (in which dealers may use bystanders as shields), stick-

[15] This is as aspect of the Lyford Street interaction order which will require further elaboration. It is clear that order is episodic and unpredictable. But, it is also clear that during stretches of order, the Lyford Street interaction order affords everyone assurances about what things mean and what people are doing. The question is whether we want to suggest that this episodic character leads to something like the unpredictability of the relevance of the IO?, or whether that unpredictability is actually a part of the interaction order as it would be in a game of change with jokers thrown in.

ups (in which bystanders may be shot), and shootings (which put both bystanders and dealers at risk) – not to mention the unreliable character of food and shelter – the local order does not predict the future as a solid ground for action.

This creates a situation in which – in spite of a well defined local order which everyone recognizes – nothing can ever be *taken for grant*ed with any consistency. We understand, from Garfinkel (1963, 2006[1948]), that being able to take social orders for granted is one of the foundations for understanding, trust and predictability in social life. When unpredictability must also be taken for granted (as a constitutive background expectation) – social life does not attain the consistency and predictability that characterizes stable social arrangements.

Because the social order of the street is highly predictable between "incidents", but has little utility for avoiding them or predicting when or where they will occur over the long term – we argue that it tends to generate a focus on the moment: a focus on what is orderly right here and right now. It also generates a high degree of compliance, which may seem ironic in the face of the almost inevitable breakdown of order. But we suggest that high levels of compliance/attachment are actually a predictable characteristic of such arrangements. Lack of consistency over time may lead people to forgo long range planning for living-in-the-moment life strategies. This will increase the importance of local interaction orders. Tactics geared toward immediate survival become paramount, which limits planning for the future, or extended thought about future consequences of present behavior. This further isolates people from the mainstream and bonds them to the local order. This is often misinterpreted as a "failure" to take the future into account – rather than as a quite rational adaptation to the episodic and unpredictable character of the local social order over time.

As with any local practice, playing by the rules does keep people safe – or relatively so – in situated orders, and creates mutually available social objects and identities that they can take for granted in those orders. But, in this rather high risk environment – the importance of something that can be taken for granted may be unusually high. The kind of collective efficacy which Sampson and others focus on tends to involve formal organizations – which in this location are already deeply penetrated into resident's lives in ways they often resent (e.g. police, social workers) and which are

often sources of disruption of the local order. Formal organizations represent the "outside" world and do not acknowledge, let alone "play by", the rules of the street. As such this type of collective efficacy may be experienced as an external constraint that cannot be either trusted or taken for granted: as a source of danger and unpredictability rather than as a source of order and efficaciousness.

By contrast, the interaction order practices associated with drug dealing may afford a deep and shared sense of collective objects and identities that is internal to the place and its people. The more embattled they are, the deeper the commitment may become. Neighborhood residents at least see the same objects and possibilities for reasonable action unfolding, whether they like it or not. By contrast, the motivations of outsiders may be hard to understand. In an embattled community that does not feel that the "outside" often has its best interests in view – the fact that the local order practices come from "inside" and belong to them may give it a positive value even when it supports activities that they do not believe in (Rawls 2000).[16] This is one of the ways inequality produces enclaves of persons in modern societies who embrace forms of order that protect them from the mainstream – but also in so doing maintain or even increase the marginality of the group – thus running counter to broadly democratic principles (Durkheim 1893, Book III, Chapter 2). In this way, Durkheim argued, inequality can destroy democracy. This conflict and the peace they make with it is much evident in the narratives of residents.

The social order of such a neighborhood rests on the nature of the underground or illegal economic enterprise and the orderly practices necessary to continually achieve it – not on what people believe or want. In communities where drug dealing structures the underground economy there will be different local order practices than in communities where sex work, or working under the table are the main illegal enterprise. Understanding where and how individuals come to these careers cannot be achieved without an understanding of the very specific local order that constitutes the context of choices

[16] There is an important contrast between beliefs/values and practices. One does not have to "believe" in practices. One has only to use them. Would we say for instance that miners "believe" in mining? They might hate mining. But, as Orwell describes them, it is the only job they have access to. The belief question is often irrelevant in regard to practices. The important thing is that they have mastered the practices necessary to accomplish this high risk job. Treating practices as though they were cultural values obscures this distinction.

available to them. Assuming that they have the same choices as middle class people living in the local order of suburban American is naïve. Even assuming that the local order of two or more drug dealing neighborhoods are the same is problematic. Some aspects may be the same – but which must await a detailed examination. Furthermore, the assumption that aspects held in common are the most important is highly problematic. What is most important about our study are those elements of the local work practices that are different from those described in previous studies – mostly focused on big cities. The local social order constitutes a closely circumscribed context within which choices must be made. The social objects, identities and practices in that order tend to be local, situated in the community or neighborhood, and accomplished through everyday interactional practices. This context of choices has its own rationality and its own contours of time and space and predictability. It tends to be fluid, and to change periodically. The local social order is also temporal, meaning that a particular space and place may have practices very particular to the neighborhood or community where people are located, but only at certain times – and for a period of time – which makes the Interaction Order differentially applicable even in the same environment. Methods that reduce details to generalizeable concepts will miss these essential orders.

Conclusion

The contingencies of place and careers in such poor urban places – as in any other place – are managed by participating in local interaction orders and by enacting identities and order properties that are consistent with them. Practices related to drug dealing do not become normative in a moral sense to "decent" people living in this neighborhood. We are not talking about norms and values – we are talking about the practices that constitute the "normality" of the objects, actions and identities in social life – however undesirable.[17] Residents must learn to understand and recognizably orient toward the

[17] We have been asked whether the Interaction Order is a moral order and if so to specify its values. We attempt a sketch of an answer here and then point the reader toward articles in which the idea is elaborated further. Durkheim made the point that in traditional societies it is the sharing of values and beliefs that produces social solidarity. In modern societies in which people do not share values and beliefs social solidarity has to be produced in another way. What Durkheim argues is that beliefs and values in a modern society are no longer where morality lies. Yet, people make the mistake of continuing to equate morality with beliefs and values. According to Durkheim, modern societies depend on shared practices, rather than shared values, and these practices don't work unless participants make a reciprocal commitment to the

requirements of these practices. In order to survive everyone needs to become competent in the "normally expected" practices that constitute the situations they must walk in and out of in the course of daily life. Just as someone would need to become competent in the practices of answering the telephone and greeting people, screening out who belongs and who does not, in order to be successful as a receptionist in a corporate office, people living in this neighborhood must become competent in the practices that constitute and structure the events that comprise their daily lives.

However, just as mastery of the rules and strategies of Chess does not commit players to any particular moral values (except those directly related to the game: not cheating and playing by the rules), mastery of local practices by residents does not entail a moral alignment. In fact, the research shows that even the drug dealers themselves often aspire to "decent" middle class values. The local order practices constitute a way of moving successfully through dangerous spaces. Thus, our ethnography, in treating this expertise and the practices that enact it as constitutive of local order, presents a poor black urban neighborhood as a place of order, rather than as a place of disorder. That order, however, is not recognized by the society outside the neighborhood – to which it looks like a place of disorder – and confuses what people do with what they value. Ironically, even garbage, usually treated as an obvious indicator of disorder and neglect, is often carefully crafted as a cover for drug dealing activities on Lyford Street. Because this order is not visible as such to outsiders, however, and because the forces of law and order are powerful and determined to impose an order, this local order places the male youth of the neighborhood at constant risk of arrest and imprisonment, even while it works to create consistency and predictability within the neighborhood. The police practice of treating many crimes as gang related and groups of drug dealers as gangs

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rules. Garfinkel's "Trust" requirement speaks to this issue, as does Goffman's "working consensus." A simple illustration can be drawn from the game of basketball. There is nothing either moral or immoral about the game of basketball. But, a person who agrees to play the game with others is also agreeing to play by the rules. Because the game (and moves in it) – like any practice – only makes sense if people play by the rules – it is a serious moral breach to intentionally violate the rules. We talk about "fair play" and "honesty" in such cases. We also say that playing such games teaches moral character. To the extent that order and safety on Lyford Street require everyone to "play by the rules," to refuse to do so can be said to be immoral. Justice in modern societies, as Durkheim argued, is closely tied to the fairness and reciprocity of practices, and becomes independent of particular values and beliefs.

(even kin groups), means that anyone who even gets close to their activities is likely to be arrested.[18]

Over the past twenty years, law enforcement presence in this community has become a permanent fixture. Community policing, problem oriented policing, crime sweeps and policing based on crime mapping are all simultaneously taking place in this neighborhood [19] Young boys living on the street are always close to drug dealing and police surveillance. There is nowhere else for them to go. Ironically, because parents who raise their children here care very much about their safety, they didn't let them go to the playground around the corner, where they would not be able to see them out the window. So, for the sake of safety, they play on the street in front of their homes – where the drug dealers also work. The tendency of the courts to sentence youths over 16 as adults (if they have any prior charge) encourages the older boys (16-18) to force the younger ones (7-12) to take risks for them; often making them handle the dangerous job of "holding" the goods.

The insight that even in the context of urban drug dealing, poverty and unemployment, meaningful social events and processes all exhibit orderliness, and that young boys in this neighborhood would need to become competent in the local order to survive and make sense of their world, is inspired by the arguments of Anderson (1999) Garfinkel (1967) and Goffman (1959). This approach encourages an examination of the orderly social processes through which participants in social arenas construct the coherence of their daily actions and routines – which in turn comprise the foundation of their assumptions about the world. This is a much needed corrective to the current emphasis on the individual and their values, choices and actions. It is also a corrective to a research emphasis on only those social patterns that are generalizable across situations to the exclusion of those social patterns that are key to understanding the local order. Locating these order properties requires research that reports in detail about the practices that participants need to use to accomplish any given social activity.

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[18] In the paper "Senseless Violence: Making Sense of Murder" (Waverly Duck 2009) the argument is made that treating the activities of drug dealers as gang activities makes it impossible for the police to understand their crimes.

[19] Each of these is discussed in the work of Peter K. Manning (cite), who identifies the emergence of new types of policing in the evolution in the war on drugs.

Ultimately, understanding the orderliness of drug dealing and how it interpenetrates community life may help agencies to work with at-risk populations, especially those elementary and middle school students who are the most at risk and most easily influenced. Protecting these students from the permanent effects of early involvement in drugs would be one positive step.

Communities might also examine their assumptions about the root causes of why children sell drugs and reconsider whether incarceration is an acceptable response to this behavior. If children *are* going to continue to be incarcerated, reforms in juvenile justice settings should be implemented that provide jobs for at-risk youth in these communities to combat the influence of dealers. Otherwise, we will continue to force children into illegal careers through our very efforts to stop them.

While most drug dealers will spend much of their lives in prison, the real tragedy continues outside the prison walls, in the world into which their children are born. So many young men have been sent to prison for drug dealing that there is a large cohort of children in such neighborhoods whose father's are currently in prison. On Lyford Street children continue to act as look-outs for drug dealers and make their way into drug dealing careers replacing their fathers. Poor schools, a dangerous environment, and the criminalization of children continue to destroy young people's prospects even when their parents have aspirations for upward social mobility into the middle class. That such communities tend to be almost exclusively minority suggests a widespread structural failure in dealing with racial equality.

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