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Crime In Queens: What factors contribute to crime and what are ways to prevent it?

Introduction

Queens, Richmond Hill is the area I reside in. Particularly an area between Jamaica Avenue and Atlantic Avenue. Jamaica Avenue is mostly composed of small mom-and-pop stores, restaurants, and bodegas. Atlantic, on the other hand, is composed of car repair shops, like AutoZone, Arch-Autoparts, and tire shops. As for transportation, the J train runs along Jamaica Ave. The J train covers from Jamaica Center, where you can access the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) or the E train, to Broad St. In Manhattan. As for buses, there is access to the Q56 on Jamaica Ave, and the Q24 on Atlantic Ave.

The rate of crime in Queens has increased by over thirty percent in the past year. The precinct that oversees the area I reside in is the 102 precinct. According to CompStat's statistics on the crime rate in Richmond Hill, you can see that in 1 year, the crime rate has increased to around thirty-one percent. Other areas like Flushing and Astoria also have had an increase in crime rates over the year. According to CompStat's statistics, flushing has had an increase of around seventeen percent in crime rate, while Astoria has had around thirteen percent (12.7%). I believe that there is a reason as to why there has been an increase in crime rates in Queens; And

so, throughout this paper, I will speak about possible contributing factors to crime and what are some solutions to help prevent it.

Factors that contribute to crime

Patrol Borough: Queens South		Precinct: 102				
	Week to Date			28 Day		
	2023	2022	% Chg	2023	2022	% Chg
Murder	0	0	0.0 %	0	0	0.0 %
Rape	1	0	- %	1	3	-66.7 %
Robbery	5	4	25.0 %	14	12	16.7 %
Felony Assault	10	4	150.0 %	33	25	32.0 %
Burglary	4	1	300.0 %	16	9	77.8 %
Grand Larceny	6	9	-33.3 %	19	27	-29.6 %
Grand Larceny Auto	3	4	-25.0 %	17	18	-5.6 %
Total	29	22	31.8 %	100	94	6.4 %

What are some factors that contribute to crime? While there are several factors that contribute to the crime rate, I will only speak about 2 in relation to Queens. Poverty is one of the major factors that contribute to an increase in crime rates. Reasons like lack of economic opportunities, limited educational access, poor living conditions, and social disorganization can be categorized under poverty. Poor communities often have their access to quality education, job opportunities, and other resources for basic needs restricted. And so, when individuals lack meeting their basic needs and are economically unstable with no access to opportunities, they may tend to illegal activities, like theft or drug trafficking to survive and gain wealth.

Another contributing factor to the crime rate is neglect. Neglected neighborhoods can create social disorganization, disorder, and limit economic opportunities. Neglected neighborhoods often have low social control, limited resources for basic needs, and weak community institutions, creating an environment that is perfect for criminal activities to flourish. Neglected neighborhoods also suffer from decaying environments, buildings to be specific, creating disorder. The more decayed or abandoned the building is the more disorder that is attracted near that area. Small signs of disorder like graffiti, public intoxication, and drug

trafficking become more common around these neglected environments. Economic opportunities also become limited in neglected neighborhoods. Communities dealing with neglect often have high rates of unemployment. Also, quality education is very limited, further limiting job opportunities as well. When individuals have limited access to quality education and have a hard time finding a good job that can support their living conditions, they may resort to criminal activities.

How can we prevent these factors?

There are several ways to address poverty in communities. Things like better access to quality education and job opportunities may aid solving part of the issue. Improving access to affordable housing, health benefits, and other basic needs also can lower financial issues. Improving access to quality education, particularly in low-income communities, can provide individuals with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities needed to secure stable employment and higher incomes. As a result, the likelihood of resorting to criminal activity as a means of survival decreases.

Programs like cash transfers, food assistance, medical support, and affordable housing can help vulnerable populations get out of poverty and improve their general well-being, which lowers their likelihood of falling victim to crime. Preventive care, early intervention programs, and adequate healthcare coverage can reduce the financial burden of healthcare costs on low-income individuals and address health disparities. It is also important to address systemic inequalities and discrimination, such as racial, gender, and socioeconomic disparities. The likelihood that someone will commit a crime due to feeling marginalized or unfairly treated can be decreased by policies and practices that support equal opportunities, social justice, and equitable access to

resources. Communities can be given the tools they need to tackle issues related to poverty and create environments that discourage criminal activity by fostering community engagement and supporting neighborhood organizations.

Preventing neglect and disorder in communities can also play a vital role in decreasing crime rates.

One way neglect and disorder can be avoided is by promoting active community involvement and fostering a sense of pride in the neighborhood. Develop



neighborhood associations, plan events for the neighborhood, and encourage regular interaction and cooperation between neighbors. This could foster a community where people look out for one another and actively collaborate to keep the neighborhood clean and safe. Investing in physical infrastructure improvement and maintenance can help prevent neglect and disorder.

Repairing and upgrading roads, sidewalks, street lighting, and public spaces fall into the category of maintaining and improving communities (Wilson, Kelling 1982, Broken Windows Theory).

And so, a well-kept community calls for more involvement and less criminal activity. Positive relationships between law enforcement and members of the community are also critical in preventing neglect and disorder. Implementing community policing strategies helps create a bond between the community and the police, leading to individuals to gain trust and report any crime they see, in other words addressing any disorder in the neighborhood (Skogan; Dealing with Disorder). Vacant and abandoned properties can contribute to neglect and disorder,

eventually becoming hotspots for criminal activity. Applying strategies and initiative to deal with vacant properties, like property rehabilitation programs, help restructure a better proud community. Neighborhood neglect and disorder can also be caused by a lack of social support and resources. Implementing initiatives and services that deal with fundamental social problems like drug abuse, poor mental health, and poverty can aid in creating a safer environment in the community. As a result, preventing neglect and disorder necessitates collaboration by residents, community groups, local government, and law enforcement. Neighborhoods can become safer, more vibrant, and less vulnerable to crime by encouraging community engagement, improving physical infrastructure, implementing proactive strategies, and addressing underlying social issues.

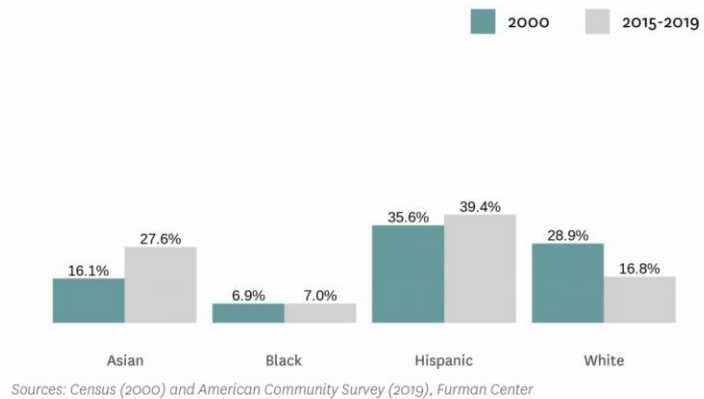
I believe that the broken windows theory can be implied in New York again, specifically in Queens. Astoria is an area of Queens that faces neglect and some disorder. Flushing is another overpopulated area that faces major disorder. I believe that the broken windows theory may aid in creating a better and safer society in Queens. As for the Richmond Hill area in Queens, I believe that having easier access to resources, better job opportunities, and more affordable housing can aid in reducing poverty. Better education programs and job opportunities will help reduce disorder in other areas of Queens as well.

Demographics

Richmond Hill is mostly composed of Hispanics, Whites, African Americans, and Asians. Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis fall into the Asian category as well. Other races like Jamaican, Guyanese, Trinidadians, and Surinamese fall into the Black/ African American

category. And as for the Hispanic category, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, Hondurans, some Cubans, and Mexican mixes fit under.

Racial and Ethnic Composition of Kew Gardens/Woodhaven



Conclusion

I believe that the increase in crime rate specifically in Queens, NY, has increased mainly because of poverty and neglect in areas where crime is high. I also believe that These issues have some solutions or ways that can aid in the prevention or reduction of the crime rate. Things like better access to education, job opportunities, and programs that aid in basic needs help reduce financial issues while funding in buildings, roads, and affordable housing aid in the neglected aspect of a community, reducing disorder and neglect.

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