



ICPSR 20620

# Implicit and Explicit Messages on Neighborhood Watch Signs in San Diego County, California, 2005-2007

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User Guide



National Institute of Justice  
Data Resources Program

# ICPSR

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## **Bibliographic Description**

ICPSR Study No.: 20620

Title: Implicit and Explicit Messages on Neighborhood Watch Signs in San Diego County, California, 2005-2007

Principal Investigator(s): P. Wesley Schultz, California State University-San Marcos

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## **Scope of Study**

Summary: The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effects of Neighborhood Watch signs on perceived crime rates, likelihood of victimization, community safety, and estimates of home and community quality. Part 1 (Study One Data) assessed the causal impact of Neighborhood Watch sign presence and content on perceptions of the community. Three Neighborhood Watch signs were incorporated into a series of slide show presentations. The signs utilized the traditional orange and white color scheme with black text and were used to represent an injunctive norm alone, a low descriptive norm for crime, or a high descriptive norm for crime. Digital color images of a for-sale home and the surrounding neighborhood of a middle class community in North San Diego County were shown to 180 undergraduates recruited from the Psychology Department's Human Participant Pool, and from other lower division general education courses at California State University, San Marcos, between July and November of 2005. Three of the slide shows were designated as Neighborhood Watch communities with one of the three sign types posted, and the fourth slide show served as a control with no posted crime prevention signs. Each slide show consisted of 20 images of the home and community, along with four instruction slides. Part 2 (Study Two Data) replicated the basic effect from Study 1 and extended the research to examine the moderating role of community social economic status (SES) on the effects of the Neighborhood Watch signs. Participants were 547 undergraduate students recruited from the

Psychology Department's Human Participant Pool, and from other lower division general education courses at California State University and Palomar Community College in San Marcos, between January and September 2006. A total of 12 slide shows were utilized in Study Two, such that each of the four sign conditions from Study One was represented across each of the three communities (Low, Middle, and High SES). Part 3 (Study Three Data) examined the potential for the physical condition of the Neighborhood Watch signs posted in the community to convey normative information about the presence and acceptance of crime in the community. Participants were 364 undergraduate students recruited from the Psychology Department's Human Participant Pool, and from other lower division general education courses at California State University and Palomar Community College in San Marcos, between October 2006 and March 2007. Study Three used the same generic (Injunctive Norm, Program Only) sign that was utilized in Studies One and Two. However, three variations (new, aged, and defaced) of the sign were used. The surveys used for Study One, Study Two, and Study Three, were identical. The data include variables on perceived crime rates, perceived likelihood of victimization, perceived community safety, community ratings, self-protective behavior, burglar's perspective, manipulation check, and demographics of the respondent.

Subject Term(s): citizen attitudes, crime impact, crime rates, fear of crime, neighborhood characteristics, neighborhood conditions, neighborhood watch programs, reactions to crime

Smallest Geographic Unit: none

Geographic Coverage: California, United States

Time Period: July 2005 - November 2005, Study One Data; January 2006 - September 2006, Study Two Data; October 2006 - March 2007, Study Three Data

Date(s) of Collection: July 2005 - November 2005, Study One Data; January 2006 - September 2006, Study Two Data; October 2006 - March 2007, Study Three Data

Unit of Observation: individual

Universe: Part 1 (Study One Data): All undergraduate students enrolled in the Psychology Department's Human Participant Pool, and all undergraduate students enrolled in lower division general education courses at California State University, San Marcos, between July and November 2005.

Part 2 (Study Two Data): All undergraduate students enrolled in the Psychology Department's Human Participant Pool, and all undergraduate students enrolled in lower division general education courses at California

State University and Palomar Community College in San Marcos, between January and September 2006.

Part 3 (Study Three Data): All undergraduate students enrolled in the Psychology Department's Human Participant Pool, and all undergraduate students enrolled in lower division general education courses at California State University and Palomar Community College in San Marcos, between October 2006 and March 2007.

Data Type: experimental data

## Methodology

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effects of Neighborhood Watch signs on perceived crime rates, likelihood of victimization, community safety, and estimates of home and community quality.

Study Design: The goal of Study One (Part 1) was to assess the causal impact of Neighborhood Watch sign presence and content on perceptions of the community. Three Neighborhood Watch signs were incorporated into a series of slide show presentations. The signs utilized the traditional orange and white color scheme with black text and were used to represent an injunctive norm alone, a low descriptive norm for crime, or a high descriptive norm for crime. The three signs are worded as follows:

- Generic (Injunctive Norm, Program Only): "Neighborhood Watch Program in Force" with the familiar picture of a burglar with a red circle and bar.
- Low Descriptive Norm: "Neighborhood Watch Program in Force: This area has been identified by the City as a Crime Free Zone" with the picture of a burglar with red circle and bar.
- High Descriptive Norm: "Neighborhood Watch Program in Force: This area has been identified by the City as a High Crime Area" with the picture of a burglar with red circle and bar.

Digital color images of a for-sale home and the surrounding neighborhood of a middle class community in North San Diego County were shown to 180 undergraduates recruited from the Psychology Department's Human Participant Pool, and lower division general education courses at California State University, San Marcos, between July and November of 2005. Three of the slide shows were designated as Neighborhood Watch communities with one of the three sign types posted, and the fourth slide show served as a control with no posted crime prevention signs. Each slide show consisted of 20 images of the home and

community, along with four instruction slides. The 20 images consisted of 10 images of the outside of the home and community (without the Neighborhood Watch sign in view), 5 images of the inside of the home, and 5 images of the outside of the home with the Neighborhood Watch sign in view (or no sign for the control condition). Participants were told that the study was about "New Techniques in Home Sales." Participants were tested individually and randomly assigned to view one of the four slide shows. After providing informed consent, participants were seated in front of a desktop computer and told that they would be watching a seven-minute slide show and then completing a questionnaire about their perceptions of the community and the for-sale home. The questionnaire was secured in an envelope so that participants were not aware of the types of questions that would be asked until after they had viewed the slide show. After completing the questionnaire, participants placed all materials (slide show CD and questionnaire) back in the envelope and returned the items to the researcher. Participants were then given a written debriefing explaining the purposes and hypothesis of the study.

The purpose of Study Two Data (Part 2) was to replicate the basic effect from Study One and extend the research to examine the moderating role of community social economic status (SES) on the effects of the Neighborhood Watch signs. Participants were 547 undergraduate students recruited from the Psychology Department's Human Participant Pool, and from other lower division general education courses at California State University and Palomar Community College in San Marcos, between January and September 2006. A total of 12 slide shows were utilized in Study Two, such that each of the four sign conditions from Study One was represented across each of the three communities (Low, Middle, and High SES). The experiment used the same middle class community tours utilized in Study One, and two additional sets of community tours were created to represent low and high SES communities. For each SES community, three of the slide shows were designated as Neighborhood Watch communities with one of the three sign types posted, and the fourth slide show served as a control with no posted crime prevention signs. The Study Two experiment used the same procedures as Study One.

The goal of Study Three Data (Part 3) was to examine the potential for the physical condition of the Neighborhood Watch signs posted in the community to convey normative information about the presence and acceptance of crime in the community. Participants were 364 undergraduate students recruited from the Psychology Department's Human Participant Pool, and from other lower division general education courses at California State University and Palomar Community College in San Marcos, between October 2006 and March 2007. Study Three used the same generic (Injunctive Norm, Program Only) sign that was utilized in Studies One and Two. However, three variations of the sign were used. The three experimental signs were modified as follows:



- New Sign: This sign contained the traditional "Neighborhood Watch Program in Force" text and was displayed in its original, undamaged form. This sign was identical to the "Generic" sign used in Studies One and Two.
- Aged Sign: This sign contained the traditional "Neighborhood Watch Program in Force" text and was modified to show signs of aging such as rust, fading, and scratches. The intent was to convey a descriptive norm that residents in the community are not involved in crime prevention practices.
- Defaced Sign: This sign contained the traditional "Neighborhood Watch Program in Force" text and was digitally modified with "spray paint" to depict a sign that had been vandalized. The intent was to convey a descriptive norm that "crime happens here."

A total of 12 slide shows were utilized in Study Three such that each of the three signs' conditions (and no sign control) was represented in each of two communities (Low or High SES). The experiment used the same community tours utilized in Study Two, except that the signs in each tour were replaced with one of the three sign conditions. For each SES community, three of the slide shows were designated as Neighborhood Watch communities with one of the three sign types posted, and the fourth slide show served as a control with no posted crime control prevention signs. The Study Three experiment used the same procedures as Study One.

Sample: Part 1 (Study One Data): Participants were 180 undergraduate students recruited from the Psychology Department's Human Participant Pool, and lower division general education courses at California State University, San Marcos.

Part 2 (Study Two Data): Participants were 547 undergraduate students recruited from the Psychology Department's Human Participant Pool, and from other lower division general education courses at California State University and Palomar Community College in San Marcos.

Part 3 (Study Three Data): Participants were 364 undergraduate students recruited from the Psychology Department's Human Participant Pool, and from other lower division general education courses at California State University and Palomar Community College in San Marcos.

Weight: none

Mode of Data Collection: self-enumerated questionnaire

Description of Variables:	The surveys used for Part 1 (Study One Data), Part 2 (Study Two Data) and Part 3 (Study Three Data) were identical. The data include variables on perceived crime rates, perceived likelihood of victimization, perceived community safety, community ratings, self-protective behavior, burglar's perspective, manipulation check, and demographics of the respondent.
Response Rates:	Part 1 (Study One Data): Of the original sample of 180, one participant was dropped due to incomplete data, resulting in a sample of 179 participants. Part 2 (Study Two Data): Data were collected from 547 participants. Part 3 (Study Three Data): Data were collected from 364 participants.
Presence of Common Scales:	<p>The data include the following scales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Perceived Crime Rate (Thompson, Bankston, and St. Pierre, 1992)</li><li>• Perceived Likelihood of Victimization (Williams, McShane, and Akers, 2000)</li><li>• Perceived Community Safety (Austin, Furr, and Spine, 2002; Baba and Austin, 1989)</li></ul> <p>Additionally, several Likert-type scales are used.</p>
Extent of Processing:	<p>Standardized missing values.</p> <p>Checked for undocumented or out-of-range codes.</p>

## Access and Availability

Note:	A list of the data formats available for this study can be found in the <a href="#">summary of holdings</a> . Detailed file-level information (such as record length, case count, and variable count) is listed in the <a href="#">file manifest</a> .
Restrictions:	To protect respondent privacy, certain identifying information is restricted from general dissemination. Specifically, most of the respondent demographic variables are restricted. Users interested in obtaining these data must complete a Restricted Data Use Agreement form and specify the reasons for the request. A copy of the Restricted Data Use Agreement form can be requested by calling 800-999-0960. Researchers can also download this form as a Portable Document Format (PDF) file from the download page associated with this dataset. Completed forms should be returned to: Director, National Archive of Criminal Justice Data, Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, Institute for Social Research, P.O. Box 1248, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248, or by fax: 734-647-8200.

~~Original~~ Original ICPSR Release: 2010

- Dataset(s):
- DS1: Study One Data
  - DS2: Study Two Data
  - DS3: Study Three Data

## Publications

Final Reports and Other Publication Resources: A list of publications related to, or based on, this data collection can be accessed from the study's download page on the NACJD Web site or through the ICPSR Bibliography of Data-Related Literature at <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/ICPSR/citations/index.html>. The list of citations includes links to abstracts and publications in Portable Document Format (PDF) files or text files when available.

Final reports and other publications describing research conducted on a variety of criminal justice topics are available from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS). NCJRS was established in 1972 by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, to provide research findings to criminal justice professionals and researchers. NCJRS operates specialized clearinghouses that are staffed by information specialists who supply a range of reference, referral, and distribution services. Publications can be obtained from NCJRS at NIJ/NCJRS, Box 6000, Rockville, MD, 20849-6000, 800-851-3420 or 301-519-5500. TTY Service for the Hearing Impaired is 877-712-9279 (toll-free) or 301-947-8374 (local). The URL for the NCJRS Web site is:

<http://www.ncjrs.org/>

## NIJ Data Resources Program

About the DRP: The National Institute of Justice Data Resources Program (DRP) makes datasets from NIJ-funded research and evaluation projects available to the research community and sponsors research and training activities devoted to secondary data analysis. Datasets are archived by the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD) at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) at the University of Michigan.

The NACJD maintains a World Wide Web site with instructions for transferring files and sending messages. Criminal justice data funded by the Department of Justice are available via the Internet at this site at no charge to the user. NACJD may be contacted at NACJD/ICPSR, P.O. Box 1248, Ann Arbor, MI, 48106-1248, 800-999-0960. The URL for the NACJD Web site is:

<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/NACJD/>



## Data Completeness Report

Notes: (1) Variables are individually listed only if they have greater than 5% missing data. These variables are listed under the appropriate percentage category in the order in which they appear in the data file. (2) The Data Completeness Report only captures information about system missing or other values that are declared missing. Codes that have a label implying that they are missing but that are not declared missing values are not reflected in this report. Data users should consult the codebook for more specific information about missing values. (3) Some variables that have 100% missing data may have been blanked by ICPSR to protect respondent confidentiality. Data users should consult the codebook for more specific information about blanked variables. (4) Data do not contain skip patterns or skip patterns are not reflected in the data as coded.

**Table 1: Distribution of Variables by Percentage of Missing Values--Study One Data**

<b>Variable Name and Label (Total Cases = 179 )</b>	<b>Percent of Cases with Missing Values</b>
76.0% ( 57 of 75 variables)	have 0% Missing Values
14.7% ( 11 of 75 variables)	have 0% - 1% Missing Values
9.3% ( 7 of 75 variables)	have 1% - 3% Missing Values
0.0% ( 0 of 75 variables)	have 3% - 5% Missing Values
0.0% ( 0 of 75 variables)	have 5% - 10% Missing Values
0.0% ( 0 of 75 variables)	have 10% - 20% Missing Values
0.0% ( 0 of 75 variables)	have 20% - 40% Missing Values
0.0% ( 0 of 75 variables)	have 40% - 99% Missing Values
0.0% ( 0 of 75 variables)	have 100% missing values



## Data Completeness Report

Notes: (1) Variables are individually listed only if they have greater than 5% missing data. These variables are listed under the appropriate percentage category in the order in which they appear in the data file. (2) The Data Completeness Report only captures information about system missing or other values that are declared missing. Codes that have a label implying that they are missing but that are not declared missing values are not reflected in this report. Data users should consult the codebook for more specific information about missing values. (3) Some variables that have 100% missing data may have been blanked by ICPSR to protect respondent confidentiality. Data users should consult the codebook for more specific information about blanked variables. (4) Data do not contain skip patterns or skip patterns are not reflected in the data as coded.

**Table 2: Distribution of Variables by Percentage of Missing Values--Study Two Data**

<b>Variable Name and Label (Total Cases = 547 )</b>	<b>Percent of Cases with Missing Values</b>
20.5% ( 16 of 78 variables)	have 0% Missing Values
74.4% ( 58 of 78 variables)	have 0% - 1% Missing Values
5.1% ( 4 of 78 variables)	have 1% - 3% Missing Values
0.0% ( 0 of 78 variables)	have 3% - 5% Missing Values
0.0% ( 0 of 78 variables)	have 5% - 10% Missing Values
0.0% ( 0 of 78 variables)	have 10% - 20% Missing Values
0.0% ( 0 of 78 variables)	have 20% - 40% Missing Values
0.0% ( 0 of 78 variables)	have 40% - 99% Missing Values
0.0% ( 0 of 78 variables)	have 100% missing values





## Data Completeness Report

Notes: (1) Variables are individually listed only if they have greater than 5% missing data. These variables are listed under the appropriate percentage category in the order in which they appear in the data file. (2) The Data Completeness Report only captures information about system missing or other values that are declared missing. Codes that have a label implying that they are missing but that are not declared missing values are not reflected in this report. Data users should consult the codebook for more specific information about missing values. (3) Some variables that have 100% missing data may have been blanked by ICPSR to protect respondent confidentiality. Data users should consult the codebook for more specific information about blanked variables. (4) Data do not contain skip patterns or skip patterns are not reflected in the data as coded.

**Table 3: Distribution of Variables by Percentage of Missing Values--Study Three Data**

<b>Variable Name and Label (Total Cases = 364 )</b>	<b>Percent of Cases with Missing Values</b>
25.0% ( 19 of 76 variables)	have 0% Missing Values
36.8% ( 28 of 76 variables)	have 0% - 1% Missing Values
38.2% ( 29 of 76 variables)	have 1% - 3% Missing Values
0.0% ( 0 of 76 variables)	have 3% - 5% Missing Values
0.0% ( 0 of 76 variables)	have 5% - 10% Missing Values
0.0% ( 0 of 76 variables)	have 10% - 20% Missing Values
0.0% ( 0 of 76 variables)	have 20% - 40% Missing Values
0.0% ( 0 of 76 variables)	have 40% - 99% Missing Values
0.0% ( 0 of 76 variables)	have 100% missing values