

Preface and Acknowledgments

Nowadays, modern China is experiencing extremely rapid social transition. Social changes in China are reflected in many social phenomena such as rapid economic growth, the speed of urbanization, and significant changes in urban spatial patterns. It is well known that high crime rates always co-occur with rapid social transition. China is also encountering high crime rates in its profound social transformation without exception.

This book focuses on the relationship between social transition and crime in the context of rapid Chinese social changes. Chinese society has experienced rapid social change. Accompanying this profound change, crime and social disorganization has increased significantly in urban China. Few empirical studies have been conducted to examine community social disorganization in China. For the purpose of my book I have selected Guangzhou as a research site to study the patterns of crime and social disorganization. My book combines methods of content analyses with ethnographic fieldwork to overcome the difficulty of scarce data. Official data has many well-known limitations and there are no community-level data available. This research first selects 1483 crime cases reported by the influential Southern Metropolis Daily in 2013 to characterize the general pattern of crime distribution. The findings suggest that both spatial and demographic density distributions of criminal cases in Guangzhou show a gradient circle pattern from city center to suburb. Focusing on three selected typical communities, this book finds important patterns of crime and social disorganization that are very different from Western research. These findings are organized along major correlates of social disorganization, such as unemployment, marriage and family, residential stability, ethnic heterogeneity, social equality, social capital, social control, social isolation and exclusion, community cohesion, trust and fear, traditions, morals and beliefs, and language. These findings extend and elaborate the Social Disorganization Theory in urban China.

In completing the manuscript and adapting it to the current book, nearly four years have been spent on this project. In these four years, I received assistance from many generous sources and now I write the following text with a grateful heart.

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