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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

EXPLORING EXPERIENCES WITH SOCIAL
DISORGANIZATION IN DENVER
COMMUNITIES

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements of the
Degree of Master of Arts

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College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice
Criminal Justice

August 2020

This Thesis by: Tiffanie Pham

Entitled: *Exploring Experiences with Social Disorganization in Denver Communities*

has been approved as meeting the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in College of Humanities and Social Sciences in Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Program of Criminology and Criminal Justice.

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ABSTRACT

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Social disorganization theory states that individuals residing in disadvantaged communities are more likely to engage in delinquency and criminality due to the elements the individuals experience (Shaw & McKay, 1969). More specifically, social disorganization theory refers to the failure of the community to fully understand and acknowledge the common goals or solve any issues that the community might be experiencing (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003). Utilizing social disorganization theory, specifically, the family disruption and poverty elements, the current literature focuses on individuals who reside in disadvantaged communities in Denver, Colorado. By using the qualitative approach, this study relied on in-depth interviews with 13 individuals who live in Summit and Newberry Housing. After the in-depth interviews, NVivo software was used in order to effectively code the transcriptions into thematic analysis. Results concluded three main themes about the individual's experience residing in disadvantaged communities (1) evidence of disorder (i.e., perception of the community, living conditions, services, and challenges in the community), (2) family disruption (i.e., family environment, relationship with parents/kids, and activities with parents/kids) and, (3) crime/delinquency. The findings in this study correlate with previous research in which give scholars a better understanding of the individual's experiences residing in

disadvantaged community. Recommended policies implications for individuals experiencing elements of social disorganization theory, specifically, family disruption, poverty, and crime/delinquency are any mentoring programs, institutional resources, community policing, and forming effective social ties.

Keywords: Social Disorganization, Family Disruption, Poverty, Disadvantaged Communities; Denver; Colorado

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among us. Rest in Peace George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and sadly many more...

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Social disorganization theory attempts to explain the causes of delinquent behavior and criminal activity that exist within a neighborhood, specifically disadvantaged communities. Social disorganization theory was developed by Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay (1969) where they established that delinquency and criminality did not casually occur throughout the city, rather it was concentrated in chaotic and disadvantaged communities (Wickes & Sydes, 2017). Social disorganization theory has shifted the criminological focus from the pathology of people to the pathology of places (Wickes & Sydes, 2017). Additionally, social disorganization refers to the community's failure to understand and comprehend the common goals (i.e., control and supervision) or solve any enduring problems that the community might be experiencing (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003). According to social disorganization theory, "poverty, residential mobility, ethnic heterogeneity, and weak social networks decree a neighborhood's capacity to control the behavior of people in public, and hence increase the likelihood of crime" (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003, p. 374). Therefore, individuals within a community who experience these elements are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior and criminal activity, compared to individuals who do not experience these elements in their community.

However, some research has shown that an individual who commits criminal activities and delinquency does so due to the stresses the individual experiences rather

than the social disorganization elements (Cantor & Land, 1985). As such, individuals who fall within the category of low socioeconomic status and are unemployed do not actually commit crime because of their status, but because of the stress of being low socioeconomic status and unemployed has on their perception of a negative life (Cantor & Land, 1985). Additionally, family disruption can positively influence an individual to engage in criminality and delinquency. Families that have experienced disruption are usually less attentive with their children than families that have not experienced disruption (Porter & Purser, 2010). This inattentiveness to their children further leads the children to engage in criminality and delinquency due to the weakening of parent and adult control.

Utilizing social disorganization theory, the purpose of this research was to examine the experience of individuals who reside in disadvantaged communities. The research qualitatively assessed the impacts of social disorganization elements on criminality among residents within disadvantaged communities and conclude if the social disorganization elements do or do not influence a more negative life perception and ultimately if the individuals engage in criminal and delinquent behavior. With that said, the researcher will further explore the reasons as to why individuals do or do not engage in crime. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews that asked questions pertaining to the social disorganization elements of family disruption and poverty. After conducting in-depth interviews, the researcher utilized the NVivo software to identify themes and patterns in participant's perceptions.

Directly examining the experiences of social disorganization theory in disadvantaged communities will be beneficial to researchers, policymakers, and

practitioners because it will provide understanding as to whether or not individuals residing in disadvantaged neighborhoods have negative experiences that could potentially increase their chances of engaging in delinquent behavior or criminal activities. In addition, the research will explain the reasons as to why individuals experience negative outcomes. Understanding the reasons why individuals do or do not commit crime will help policymakers and practitioners implement the correct policy implications for these certain communities. Altogether, the purpose of the study was to understand the negative adversities that individuals experience in disadvantaged communities and whether or not these negative adversities influences the individual's outlook on life.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Historical Development of Social Disorganization Theory

Social disorganization is a theoretical perspective that focuses on the ecological differences in levels of criminal activity and delinquency based on structural and cultural factors influencing the nature of the social order across neighborhoods and communities (Rengifo, 2009). Social disorganization theory began in Chicago as it was the fastest-growing city in the early 1900s. Chicago was cultivating at a rapid pace due to the coal railroads and employment availability (Bernard, Snipes, & Gerould, 2016). With the increase in economics, crime quickly began to emerge in Chicago because the city was dense with so many people. The overwhelming amount of people moving into the city resulted in chaos and normlessness which in turn produced anomie. Anomie is defined as a “state of inadequate regulation” (Bernard et al., 2016, p. 123). Crime was increasing at such a fast pace that Chicago’s police department did not know how to effectively handle the enormous amount of crime. So, the University of Chicago’s Sociology Department attempted to pinpoint the influences associated with criminal activity and to determine the connection among the factors (Bernard et al., 2016). Since this study was centered on an image of human communities inspired by plant ecology, it became known as the Chicago School of Human Ecology.

Borrowing from biological science, the theory of human ecology argues that humans are unique in their focus as a biological organism and social beings in the

interaction with their environment (Bubolz & Sontag, 2009). More specifically, the term ecology is often connected to the idea of guarding the natural environment. Ecology is defined as “a branch of biology in which plants and animals are studied in their relationships to each other and to their natural habitat” (Bernard et al., 2016, p. 136). Ecologists analyzed the interrelationships and interdependencies in an effort to uncover the forces that describe the specific activities of each part. Robert Park (1952) proposed a similar idea between the distribution of plant life in the environment and the organization of human life in societies. From the study of plants and animal ecology, Park (1952) derived two main concepts that developed the basis of human ecology. The first concept derived from the observations of an ecologist named Warming, who distinguished that a group of plants in a specific area may have certain characteristics that are similar to those of an individual organism (Park, 1952). This phenomenon is called the “plant communities.” Other ecologists further argued that the plant and animal life in a particular environment tend to acquire a “natural economy.” The idea of natural economy specified that “different species are able to live more prosperously together than separately” (Bernard et al., 2016, p. 137). Park (1952) stated that the idea of natural economy is called “symbiosis,” which is when different species live together for the mutual benefit of each individual. Park (1952) found that there were many “natural areas” where different types of people lived and had an organic unity of their own, such as “China-town,” “Little Italy,” or the “Black Belt” in San Francisco. Other natural areas consisted of individuals in particular income or occupational groups or industrial and business areas. Symbiotic relationships occurred not only between individuals within a natural area but also between the natural areas within a city.

The second concept that Park (1952) acquired from plant ecology is the process by which the balance in a certain area may change when new species enter the area; these new species dominate the environment, and push out other forms of life. Ecologists noted this process as “invasion, dominance, and succession” (Bernard et al., 2016, p. 138). This invasion process can also be seen in human societies; when a new cultural or ethnic group takes over an entire neighborhood from another group. Additionally, industry and businesses related to the new culture or group may also come into neighborhoods and invade and dominate the entire residential neighborhood as well. This idea of industry and businesses invading and dominating residential communities is not necessarily gentrification, which is improving the community, rather, it is deteriorating the communities by dictating the residents and ceasing any existing relationships.

Through the processes of invasion, dominance, and succession came the idea of the concentric circles (Park, 1952). Ernest Burgess (1928) suggested that cities do not grow at their edges, instead, they have a tendency to expand outward from the center in patterns of concentric circles which is described as concentric zones. There are five concentric zones; 1) central business district, 2) transitional zone, 3) working-class zone, 4) residential zone, and 5) commuter zone (Burgess, 1928). Zone I is the central business district and consists of retail, financial, civic, recreational, and political activities. Zone II has been described as the interstitial area that consists of deteriorated housing, factories, and abandon buildings. This zone is generally the oldest section within the city and it is constantly involved in the invasion, dominance, and succession process by businesses and industries that are developing from zone I (Burgess, 1928). Since zone II is the least desirable section within the city, it is typically occupied by indigent and immigrant

individuals. Following the transitional zone is the working-class zone which is zone III. Zone III contains relative modest homes and apartments that are mainly taken by workers and their families who have escaped the horrible conditions of zone II. The last zone within the city is zone IV, the residential zone that consists of single-family residents with actual yards and garages (Burgess, 1928). Outside of the city limits are the suburban areas and the satellite cities which is classified as zone V, the commuter zone. These five zones constantly grow and gradually move into the next zone because of the process of invasion, dominance, and succession.

Park's (1952) theories of human ecology were further used as the basis of Shaw's study of juvenile delinquency (Bernard et al., 2016). During this period, Shaw worked as a probation and parole officer and through his career he concluded that the problem of juvenile delinquency was a product of juvenile detachment from conventional groups. Shaw believed that delinquents were essentially normal human beings and that their illegal activity was due to the environment that they resided in (Bernard et al., 2016). The first stage of Shaw's study involved analyzing the characteristics of neighborhoods that had the greatest amount of delinquents. However, the neighborhoods that had the most delinquency only consisted of 20 percent of adolescents who were actually involved with the criminal justice system (Bernard et al., 2016). Shaw then compiled an extensive "life history" from delinquent individuals to uncover exactly how they related to their specific environment. By compiling an extensive life history on delinquent individuals, it allowed Shaw and McKay (1969) to adequately assess the influences of delinquency among the individuals.

Shaw and McKay (1931) concluded that physical status, economic status, and population composition were the main factors for criminal activity and delinquency. Neighborhoods with the greatest delinquency rates were discovered to be located within or immediately surrounding heavy industry or business. Not only did these neighborhoods contain heavy industry and businesses but these neighborhoods also had the highest number of condemned buildings. Further, the residential population in these neighborhoods was also decreasing (Shaw & McKay, 1931). The population decrease was anticipated to be related to industries invading the area which caused limited physical space and buildings for residential occupation. For the economic status component, there were high rates of delinquency in areas with low socioeconomic status. Lastly, areas with excessive delinquency rates are found in concentrated communities with foreign and African American family households (Shaw & McKay, 1931). Shaw and McKay (1931) also concluded that having high residential mobility can also affect the neighborhood's social control. Since these neighborhoods are constantly in transition, the residents no longer hold relations with other residents, causing the residents to not care about the appearance and reputation of the neighborhood (Shaw & McKay, 1931). High residential mobility is also disruptive to the neighborhood's cohesiveness because residents no longer know the children who reside in that specific area. Thus, children who are out of their parental control may be under no control within the neighborhood. Having a high turnover rate of residents within the neighborhood also leads to a high turnover rate in local schools. This turnover is disruptive to the learning and disciplined environment for children because they are unable to effectively make friendships that will help them prosper (Shaw & McKay, 1931). Overall, these changes within any

neighborhood can generate a great deal of conflict and disorganization that can be manifested into delinquency.

In 1978, social disorganization theory was revitalized by Kornhauser (1978). Kornhauser (1978) argued that Shaw and McKay's social disorganization theory contains two major arguments: a social disorganization and subcultural argument. The social disorganization argument stated that delinquency develops in neighborhoods where relationships and institutions are broken down and cannot sustain effective social control of the neighborhood. For the subcultural argument, Kornhauser (1978) stated that delinquency was supported by the shared values and norms of the neighborhood residents. Shaw and McKay concluded that the subcultural argument was the most important out of the two arguments because subcultural relationships accounted for most delinquency. However, Kornhauser (1978) debated that Shaw and McKay's reasoning was illogical because Shaw and McKay's theory described delinquent behavior emerges first due to the social disorganization within the neighborhood and then delinquent subculture occurs immediately after. Kornhauser (1978) argued that disorganized neighborhoods would have delinquent behavior whether or not subcultural relationships are formed but the delinquent subcultural relationship would not be able to exist if it were not for the social disorganization component within the neighborhood. After Kornhauser (1978) disagreed with Shaw and McKay's study, Bursik and Webb (1982) also concluded that neighborhood social disorganization is primarily the justification of the neighborhood's delinquency rates. Bursik and Webb (1982) focused on Shaw and McKay's (1931) main idea of residential succession which is known as neighborhoods retaining their high rates of crime despite turnovers in populations. Bursik and Webb

(1982) found that the residential succession argument was supported by data obtained from 1940 to 1950. That is, neighborhood crime rates stayed constant despite high residential mobility. However, after 1950 all neighborhoods that experienced race-based turnover were characterized by high levels of delinquency, regardless of the rates of delinquency before the change occurred.

Furthermore, Sampson (1999) examined research on the relationship between neighborhoods and crime in an attempt to understand how community structures and cultures are associated with criminality and delinquency. Sampson (1999) concluded that the community characteristics that result in anonymity are: poverty, family disruption, and high residential mobility. Not only do these characteristics result in anonymity but these characteristics also affect the community by low participation in conventional activities and lack of social relationships among residents. These characteristics then lead to low social capital where neighborhood residents are not able to exert effective control over the neighborhood's public spaces such as streets and parks (Sampson, 1999). Furthermore, local teenagers have significant freedom due to the anonymity within the residential neighborhood. The consequences of local teenager anonymity resulted in an increase in criminality and delinquency in the neighborhood. Sampson and Groves (1989) also discovered that the presence of unsupervised teenage peer groups within the community had the greatest effect on street crimes and individual rates of violent behavior. Sampson and Groves (1989) then introduced the idea of *collective efficacy* which is defined as the neighborhood's ability to maintain social control. Collective efficacy is implemented only when neighborhood residents take overt actions in maintaining public order, such as reporting any criminality to the authorities or forming a

neighborhood watch program. Sampson and Groves (1989) describe that residents will only report and complain to the authorities when there is cohesiveness and mutual trust within the community. If there is a lack of mutual trust and shared expectations, then residents within the community are unlikely to act when disorder enters public space.

This theory of collective efficacy was tested in 196 Chicago neighborhoods by observations (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999). The authors used video recording to analyze disorder and interviews to assess collective efficacy. The interview questions consisted of activities such as drug selling, drinking/smoking, fighting, or solicitation of prostitutes. The authors measured “shared expectations for intervening in support of neighborhood social control” by asking residents if they were more likely to take action in response to five certain situations that involve public disorder (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999, p. 620). In addition to measuring shared expectations, the authors also measured “cohesive and mutual trust” by asking the residents five questions pertaining if the neighborhood was a “close knit neighborhood” and if the people in the neighborhood shared the same “values” as one another (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999, p. 620).

After analyzing the video recordings Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) concluded that both physical and social disorganization were strongly related to intense poverty and mixed land use. Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) stated that there was less criminal activity in neighborhoods with more social cohesion and shared expectation. Thus, Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) believed that the underlying issue with crime seems to be structural disadvantage and weakened collective efficacy. Morenoff, Sampson, and Raudenbush (2001) found that collective efficacy is also extremely important in serious crime, such as homicide. Morenoff and colleagues (2001) discovered that the homicide

rates in Chicago were highly influenced by proximity to violent areas, neighborhood inequality, and collective efficacy. Furthermore, collective efficacy had a strong impact on homicide.

Lowenkamp and his colleagues (2003) stated, “the social disorganization perspective has experienced a dramatic revitalization, reemerging from the dustbin of spent criminological paradigms to challenge for the status as a preeminent macro-level theory” (p. 351). Researchers who have been examining the social disorganization phenomena, specifically the neighborhoods effect on crime, have surpassed the consideration of structural characteristics to neighborhood social practices. The neighborhood social practices may partially be determined by the neighborhood’s structural conditions, but it had direct effects on crime and disorder. Since collective efficacy has mediated parts that influenced structural conditions on criminal activity, researchers have looked to other social processes as potential mediators.

Public Housing and Crime

An area of interest for researchers who specialize in examining social disorganization and neighborhoods is public housing areas or public housing developments (Bernard et al., 2016). Public housings and public housing developments are located in every city of substantial size across America. These communities can be portrayed as “micro-neighborhoods” due to their own rights. Public housings and public housing developments have a high concentration of “poverty, racial minorities, residential mobility, and female headed families” (Bernard et al., 2016, p. 149). Researchers suggest that one of these specific elements may impact the residents to be disproportionately affected by crime. With that said, this study will further assess

individuals residing in disadvantaged communities (also known as public housing) who experience family disruption and poverty.

Social Disorganization Elements Influence on Crime

Social disorganization theory states that individuals who are of low socioeconomic status, experience family disruption, reside in poverty, and encounter residential mobility are more likely to engage in crime (Cantor & Land, 1985). As all of these elements are related to criminal activity within a community, this study will only be focusing on two elements; family disruption and poverty. Recent studies explain that families who are vulnerable are typically uninvolved in the community's conventional activities (Sampson, 1987). Within the family disruption, the relationship between parents is often examined. More specifically, parents who are married typically reduce engagement in delinquency and criminality because of the availability of both parents being attentive to their children (Porter & Purser, 2010). Single-parent households, on the other hand, are associated with crime due to the weakness of parent and adult control (Sampson, 1987). Lastly, poverty usually occurs in areas where disadvantaged people reside known as public housing (Newman, 1972). Public housing appears to restrain social networking between residents, adversely affecting the crime rates of these areas (Newman, 1972). Altogether, these elements, family disruption and poverty, of social disorganization theory will be further analyzed in conjunction with whether or not they are associated with delinquency and criminality in disadvantaged communities.

Family Disruption

Studies have shown that there is a relationship between family disruption and crime, however, the correlation between family disruption and crime stem through many

different facets. Family disruption can be referred to events that actually disrupt a family structure, such as single-parent household/female-parent households, divorce, separation, and out of home placements (Prevo & Ter Weel, 2015). Not only does the family disruption aspect physically disrupt the structure of the family but it further contributes to the disruption at a community level (Sampson, 1987). Studies suggest that adolescents who experience these types of family disruption are more likely to become delinquent, use drugs, have negative personality/social traits, mental illness, and academic adversities (Biblarz & Raftery, 1993; Blumstein, 1986; Prevo & Ter Weel, 2015; Sampson, 1987; Stanick, Crosby, & McDonald, 2017).

Single-parent/female headed-households. Communities characterized by high levels of single-parent and female headed households face a higher probability of experiencing high rates of delinquency and criminality compared to other communities (Patterson, 1991). Similarly, Osgood and Chambers (2000) discovered that the higher the proportion of female-headed households, the more likely youth will engage in delinquent behavior and criminal activity. Youth were more likely to engage in delinquent behavior and criminal activity due to the weakness of parent and adult control and are less able to maintain scrutiny and supervision (Osgood & Chambers, 2000; Patterson, 1991). The burden of monitoring the behavior of the children within the households falls disproportionately on adults in households, especially the mothers (Osgood & Chambers, 2000). Therefore, households without additional marital partners are more relevant to delinquency and criminality (Osgood & Chambers, 2000). Ouimet (2000), studied social disorganization and criminal opportunity and found that the single-parent household also had a positive effect on the juvenile offender and the juvenile violent crime rate.

Divorced households. In addition to the single-parent households, families that had divorced parents were also significantly associated with delinquency and criminality. It has long been recognized that marriage is crucially important for a variety of reasons (Porter & Purser, 2010). As a matter of fact, marriage has reported to encouragingly contribute to the health and well-being of children within the household (Porter & Purser, 2010). Not only has marriage contributed to better health and well-being, but it has also been related to a decrease in criminal activity at both the individual and community level (Porter & Purser, 2010). On the contrary, non-married parent households are also related to delinquency and criminality (Porter & Purser, 2010). More specifically, teens living in single or remarried households have a higher chance of engaging in delinquent behaviors compared to teens living in married households (Porter & Purser, 2010). Parents who were married showed a reduction of engagement in delinquency and criminality in both the individual and aggregate levels (Porter & Purser, 2010). Additionally, families with married parents tend to stabilize other interpersonal relationships while fostering attachment to prosocial relationships and activity which in turn will decrease crime (Porter & Purser, 2010).

Community disruption. Sampson (1987) delineates that at the community level, family disorder may affect crime and delinquency for three main reasons. First, individuals who come from an unstable or single-parent household tend to have higher rates of involvement in delinquency and criminality (Sampson, 1987). Second, a significant amount of vulnerable families in the community may reduce participation for formal organization and conventional activities (Sampson, 1987). This reduction in participation will ultimately deteriorate the community's formal social control

mechanism (Sampson, 1987). Third, vulnerable families are less able to contribute to the community's informal social control mechanism due to constantly watching out for strangers, properties, and supervising youths (Sampson, 1987). Additionally, Sampson and Groves (1989) added that family disruption also causes inadequate local friendship linkages. Furthermore, family disruption can influence resource depletion and perceived powerlessness, which also adds to the weakening of the community's collective efficacy (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). Overall, the association between family disruption and engagement in delinquency and criminality may also include weak parental attachment, little academic achievement, emotional problems and difficulties in resources (Sampson et al., 1997).

Poverty

Numerous area-level studies have reported that there is a significant relationship between poverty and crime (Wong, 2011). However, there are a number of studies that reported non-supportive and contradicting evidence to the relationship between poverty and crime (Wong, 2011). A few studies reported that poverty does not influence delinquency or crime. In fact, researchers have found that high rates of poverty populations were correlated with lower rates of sexual and physical assault (Wong, 2011). This is perhaps due to the outward relocation of men in moderately poor rural communities (Wong, 2011). Conversely, the majority of the studies convey that poverty does indeed influence crime. For instance, Bursik's (1989) study of Chicago revealed that residential instability was increased due to the construction of public housing. This increase in residential instability contributed to the increase in criminal activity (Bursik, 1989). In addition, the political decision concerning the location of public housing

indirectly increased crime by “introducing a new source of instability into the neighborhood that decreased the community’s ability to regulate itself” (Bursik, 1989, p. 117). Public housing also appeared to restrain the growth of social networks between residents, thereby reducing the amount of surveillance (Newman, 1972). Not only did public housing reduce the amount of surveillance but it also reduced the control over individuals which made these areas more appealing to commit crime (Newman, 1972). A study in Atlanta revealed that criminal activity was increased within public housing projects (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003). More specifically, Black communities with public housing demonstrated the highest crime rates compared to Black communities without public housing that had low crime rates (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003). Therefore, individuals who experience residential mobility and poverty are more likely to commit crime and delinquency due to the restricted ability to form connections between each other.

Overall, it is clear that social disorganization has the possibility to influence an individual in committing and engaging in criminal activity and delinquency. As the theory states, individuals who experience family disruption, and reside in poverty conditions are more likely to commit crime. However, each of these social disorganization elements influence an individual to commit crime and deviance in a different manner. Family disruption can influence criminality and delinquency due to the vulnerable families who are uninvolved in their community’s conventional activities and events (Sampson, 1987). In addition to vulnerable families being uninvolved in conventional activities, disruptive families are more likely to be unaware and inattentive of their children which leads to weakened parent and adult control (Sampson, 1987).

Finally, poverty creates stress on the residents in which also influence criminality and delinquency.

Overview of Literature

The historical development of social disorganization theory has led researchers to closely examine the adverse communities that experience the elements of social disorganization. As noted above, social disorganization theory states that individuals who are of low socioeconomic status, experience family disruption, reside in poverty, and encounter residential mobility are more likely to engage in criminal activity and delinquency (Cantor & Land, 1985). However, this current study only examines two elements; family disruption and poverty. Individuals who experience family disruption, and poverty have a positive relationship with the engagement in criminal activity and delinquency. Within the element of family disruption, adolescents who experience family disruption can relate to many different aspects within a family structure. The family structure can physically be disrupting through single-parent/female-headed household, divorce, separation, and out of home placements. Not only does the disruption within family increase the likelihood of individuals engaging in criminal and delinquent behavior but it also has an effect on community disruption as a whole. In addition to family disruption, poverty communities can also increase an individual's ability to commit crime and delinquency due to the restraint in social networks between residents (Bursik, 1989; Newman, 1972).

Overall, with the knowledge from past research regarding social disorganization theory, this current study focused on individual's experiences of family disruption and poverty in disadvantaged communities. The current study addressed the significant gap in

literature by examining the experiences of individuals rather than assessing if the elements actually influence delinquency and criminality. Including the perspectives and experiences of individuals who reside in disadvantaged communities will give policy makers and researchers a better understanding of what these individuals actually experience. Altogether, the experiences of individuals have generally been unexplored, therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of those individuals.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY
Research Questions

The main purpose of this research was to examine the impact of social and community disorganization on individuals' life experiences and opportunities. As stated above, the elements of social disorganization that were focused on in this study were; family disruption and poverty. The research question for this study was:

Q1 Do individuals who reside in disadvantaged communities experience negative life outcomes due to their personal challenges?

In addition, this study also examined whether the individuals do not engage in any criminal activity and delinquency, and the reasons as to why they do not participate in crime and deviance. The sub-questions that were tested in this study were:

Q1a Do individuals who experience family disruption have a more negative life perception?

Q1b Do individuals who experience poverty have a more negative life perception?

Altogether, the purpose of this study was to understand the negative adversities that individuals experience in disadvantaged communities and whether or not these negative adversities influence delinquency and criminality. If the social disorganization elements do indeed influence crime and delinquent acts, the researcher would want to fully understand the reasoning as to why these specific elements influence crime. However, if these specific elements do not influence crime and delinquency, the researcher will have the ability to fully understand why individuals who experience these

elements do not engage in crime and delinquency. Furthermore, the researcher would like to uncover any possible factors that helped the individual refrain from committing criminal activity and delinquency. The researcher examined and tested the research questions through in-depth interviews.

Research Design

The research design that was used in this current study was the qualitative approach with in-depth interviews. Qualitative research focused on individual's experiences and the importance the individual places on the events, structure, and processes of the individual's social setting (Skinner, Tagg, & Holloway, 2000). Additionally, qualitative studies provide a holistic view, through the respondents' own words and perceptions, of their understandings in certain situations. By capturing participants' experiences in their own words, the responses gave the researcher a better understanding of each of their perceptions that was explored. Utilizing the qualitative interviews allowed the researcher to fully understanding the participant's neighborhood environment and the participant's family environment. In addition to understanding and capturing the participants' full experience, the qualitative research method created openness and directness that further encouraged participants to fully expand on any desired topics. With participants expanding on desired topics it allowed the researcher to fully analyze the responses into appropriate themes.

McCarty (2013) stated that interviews were essential in exploring issues in different communities because it helped clarify any confusion and led to a better understanding of certain topics. Additionally, the qualitative approach provided a means of researching the dark figure of crime. Since the qualitative approach allowed

participants to fully be opened in their responses, participants may disclose past criminal activities that they were never convicted of. Only the qualitative approach has the potential to provide understanding and awareness into dark figure of crimes (Noaks & Wincup, 2004). Hobbs (2000) stated the following,

The covert, non-institutionalized base from which professional and organized crime operates favors the use of a range of largely interpretive approaches. Until gangsters, armed robbers, fraudsters and their ilk indicate their enthusiasm for questionnaires or large-scale social surveys, ethnographic research, life histories, oral histories, biographies, autobiographies and journalistic accounts will be at a premium (p. 442).

With the examples of qualitative methods in mind, this study was an ethnographic research in which was used to capture the participants' individualized experiences and perceptions of residing in disadvantaged communities. More specifically, Coleman and Moynihan (1996) also argued that qualitative techniques are beneficial because they provide the opportunity to make distinct contributions by clarifying the contexts in which offending occurs and the important meaning attached to the behaviors.

The qualitative approach also increases the appreciation of the social world from the perspectives of the offenders, victims, or criminal justice professionals (Noaks & Wincup, 2004). Matza (1969) used the term "appreciative studies" to indicate specific studies of deviant subcultures. This led criminologists to talk about appreciative criminology, which refers to "an approach that seeks to understand and appreciate the social work from the point of view of the individual or category of individual, with particular reference to crime and deviance" (Noaks & Wincup, 2004, p.10)

Qualitative research can also complement existing quantitative research in various ways (Noaks & Wincup, 2004). First, qualitative approaches assist in informing the design of research instruments for the gathering of quantitative data. Second, qualitative studies contribute to our understanding of the situation in which criminal activity and delinquency occur and criminal justice is administered through delivering rich and detailed data (Coleman & Moynihan, 1996). As Bottomley and Pease (1986) stated “we should not allow statistics to make us forget the people behind the numbers” (p. 170). A burglary offense is an official crime statistic that is the result of the negotiation processes between individuals involved (Noaks & Wincup, 2004). However, these statistics do not elaborate on the decisions to report and record the criminal activity. Therefore, decision-making procedures can be researched using qualitative research techniques such as in-depth interviews. These in-depth interviews allowed the researcher and potential scholars a more exhaustive and detailed understanding of the reasons why people do what they do. As noted above, qualitative studies are able to understand the decision-making procedure within individuals due to capturing the individual experiences, thoughts, and feelings.

Lastly, qualitative research is useful for criminological research because it helps inform policy makers in the development of policies and crime control (Noaks & Wincup, 2004). There are various ways in which qualitative research can help in the developmental process of policies. Qualitative research can fulfill the function of evaluating current policies. Finally, qualitative research can also serve as an instrument for generating new ideas for effective policy improvement.

Overall, utilizing qualitative research was useful for this particular study because it captured the participants’ full experience of living in disadvantaged communities.

While capturing the participants' full experience, qualitative research created openness and directness that encouraged participants to fully expand on questionnaires. With the participants being able to expand on questionnaires it will allow the researcher to completely understand the participants' perceptions of residing in the disadvantaged communities. In addition, qualitative research helped explore issues in different communities by clarifying misunderstandings which can lead to better understandings of certain topics, specifically, the social disorganization elements of family disruption and poverty.

Sample Method and Setting

This research study was conducted in urban areas in Denver, Colorado. Specifically, the study was conducted in two different populations. The populations were Summit Housing and Newberry Housing. The populations and participants that were analyzed were given a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality of the communities and the participants within those communities. The sample of the study consisted of residents who were currently residing in that specific neighborhood. According to a qualitative report, Summit Housing currently consisted of a total population of 1,441 individuals (Piton Foundation, 2014). Within Summit Housing there were a total of 459 households. Of the 459 households, 195 units were families. Approximately, 78 percent of the households within Summit Housing were children living with a single parent (Piton Foundation, 2014). In addition, 74 percent of families and 80 percent of persons residing in Summit Housing were in poverty (Piton Foundation, 2014). The poverty rate for Summit Housing was 72 percent which was five times higher than the city of Denver at 14 percent. The demographic characteristics for Summit Housing were 8 percent White, 26

percent Black, 54 percent Hispanics, 8 percent Asian, 1 percent Native American, and 3 percent Multiracial.

Unfortunately, the only statistics for Newberry Housing were from 2000 and they only consisted of demographic characteristics based on race (Piton Foundation, 2014). The racial makeup of Newberry Housing was 32 percent White, 7 percent African American, 4 percent Asian, 1 percent Native Americans, and 52 percent Hispanic/Latino. The crime and poverty rates were much higher compared to the city and national average at 196 incidents per 1,000 people and the poverty rate at 38 percent (Piton Foundation, 2014). There were no family-based statistics for Newberry Housing, however, since these housings are under the same company Newberry's housing family statistics should be somewhat similar to Summit Housing.

The researcher utilized the snowball sampling technique. Sample elements within the snowball sampling method were chosen as they were identified by successive informants (Bachman & Schutt, 2014). This sampling method was useful for this particular study because each individual within the population would be interconnected with another individual who had similarities based on their family structure and residential environment. This method was also useful for this study because the study focused on residents who experienced family disruption and poverty; not everyone within disadvantaged communities will experience family disruption and poverty, therefore, the snowball method was convenient in obtaining individuals with these certain characteristics. The researcher was able to successfully use the snowball method due to the relationships the researcher had with some of the residents within each community.

The first participant was recruited due to previous relations with the researcher. Refer to appendix C for the snowball sample diagram.

The study snowball sampled until the responses became saturated. Morse (1995) states that qualitative research is mainly “to collect data until saturation occurs” (p. 147). Saturation in the responses is known as “data adequacy” and operationalized as the collection of data until there are no new information that is able to be obtained (Morse, 1995). Additionally, with qualitative data the process of saturation is able to form patterns and themes that begin to make sense of what is being explored (Morse, 1995). For each community the sample size may be different depending on the saturation in responses from the participants.

A sampling frame was not needed for this study since the researcher knew people at both locations. There were some participants who provided interest and were willing to participate in the study. During the contact phase, the participants were asked their age to ensure eligibility for the study. The participant’s ages were 18 years of age and older. This study does not contain participants under the age of 18 years old due to the difficulties of parental consent and parental involvement. Parental involvement may skew and influence the individual responses when answering the questionnaires on the interview guide. Additionally, having parents and guardians present when answering the questionnaires could lead to bias and unsupportive results because the potential participants could not be fully honest during the interview. After completing the interview, the researcher will reward the participants with the chance of winning a twenty-dollar gift card to a local grocery store.

Sample

There were a total of thirteen participants who were interviewed. Of the thirteen participants, eight lived at Summit Housing and five lived in Newberry Housing. The demographics of the individuals that participated in the study were six males and seven female participants. The age range was twenty-five to fifty years old. Of the thirteen participants, five individuals were African American, four individuals were Hispanic, two individuals were Asian, one was White, and one was mixed race. Five participants were parents; two were fathers and three were mothers. Ten participants were living in a single parent household and only three participants were living with both parents.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Participant Number	Name	Age	Sex	Race
1	Jordan ¹	26	Male	African American
2	Claudia ¹	25	Female	Hispanic
3	Jayden ²	25	Male	Mixed Race
4	Stephanie ¹	28	Female	Hispanic
5	Lily ²	28	Female	White
6	Larry ²	33	Male	African American
7	Karla ^{2*}	42	Female	African American
8	Kavon ^{1*}	27	Male	African American
9	Julian ¹	39	Male	Hispanic
10	Jonah ^{2*}	50	Male	Hispanic
11	Amber ¹	25	Female	Asian
12	Chanel ^{1*}	48	Female	African American
13	Avery ^{1*}	50	Female	Asian

Note. *Participants are parents

¹Participants are from Summit Housing

²Participants are from Newberry Housing

Data Collection Procedures and Measurements

The researcher conducted in-depth interviews from March to May 2020 to ensure full detail of the participants' experiences in Summit and Newberry Housing. There were a total of thirteen interviews and these interviews took place in a variety of places, including coffee shops, restaurants, recreation centers, and parks for safety reasons. Interviews in late March were mainly conducted at local parks due to the closure of all businesses during COVID-19. All interviews were conducted by the researcher. Prior to the interview, the researcher gave each participant the consent form which briefly described the study and what the participant's involvement entailed. Each interview lasted about thirty to forty minutes. During the interview, the researcher asked the participants if they were comfortable being audio-recorded. For the respondents who refused to be audio-recorded, the researcher quickly wrote the responses to the questions on the interview guide. With that said, five participants refused to be audio recorded. However, audio recording the interviews was preferred because it allowed for accurate data. All information containing the interview and audio recording were kept on a password-protected computer. In the in-depth interview the researcher asked open-ended questions regarding family disruption, poverty, and crime/delinquency. There was a total of twenty questions; one overall question to get the participant going, five questions pertaining to family disruption, seven questions pertaining to poverty, and seven questions pertaining to crime/delinquency. Reference the interview guide in appendix B.

Once the interviews were completed, the researcher transcribed the interviews word for word using Microsoft Word to facilitate data analysis. Each of the interviews that were recorded were transcribed, which yielded six to eight pages of text per

interview. As for the interviews that were not recorded, the researcher also transcribed the writing on the interview guide. The transcriptions were to allow for greater consistency and trustworthiness, as well as thicker descriptions (Bachman & Schutt, 2014). Thicker description is beneficial for this current study due to the rich description that provides a sense of what it is like from the participant's standpoint and their entire experiences (Bachman & Schutt, 2014).

Once transcriptions were completed, the researcher inputted the transcriptions into the qualitative analysis software program called NVivo. The researcher used the NVivo software to connect and identify thematic results faster, easier, and more proficiently. Additionally, the researcher used NVivo to store and organize the data into one platform to ensure efficient analyzation. The use and function of NVivo are further described in the section below. The participant's data codes included are family disruption, poverty, and crime/delinquency. Additionally, pseudonyms were prearranged to replace names, dates, and places. Pseudonyms were given in order to maintain and protect the confidentiality of the neighborhood and participants.

Analysis

As noted in the previous section, the researcher used NVivo to analyze the transcriptions from the participants. NVivo was used due to its ability to allow the researcher to manage data analysis and synthesis (Houghton, Murphy, Meehan, Thomas, Brooker, & Casey, 2017). In addition, the researcher conducted a thematic analysis as it is the foundational method for qualitative studies (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that a thematic analysis is a process of identifying, analyzing, and recording patterns also known as themes within the data. Thematic analyses minimally

classified and described the data set in rich detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These themes captured important information about the data in correspondence to the research question, and signified some level of patterned response or significance within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) describe six important steps in doing a thematic analysis; 1) familiarizing the data, 2) generating preliminary codes, 3) search for themes, 4) review themes, 5) define and name themes, and lastly, 6) produce the report. These six important phases of a thematic analysis were essentially the guide for the researcher in the current study. The researcher followed these six steps in order to complete data analysis.

During the first phase of familiarizing the data, the researcher had prior knowledge of the data with some initial analytical benefits or thoughts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). With regard to this study, the researcher had prior knowledge of the residents who may potentially participate in the study, as well as the community the residents reside in. In addition, it was vital that the researcher immersed themselves in the data to the degree that the researcher is familiar with the complexity and extensiveness of the content (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This immersion process involved 'repeated reading' of the data set in an active way, such as searching for patterns and any significant information (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The second phase of thematic analysis is generating preliminary codes. When the researcher completed familiarizing themselves with the data set, the next step was generating a list of potential ideas of what was interesting within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This phase then contains the production of codes from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Codes identified features within the data that appeared to be important

information regarding the topic of interest. During this phase, the researcher gathered the data (transcriptions) and generated a list of potential ideas of what was interesting such as elements of family disruption and poverty. The researcher coded interesting and potential patterns within the data set by writing notes on the side of the document and highlighted the document to indicate the codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). When the researcher coded interesting parts of the data, the researcher used NVivo to code those interesting patterns that pertained to the elements specified.

The third step in a thematic analysis was searching for themes. This step begins when the data has been coded and organized (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After each code has been identified the researcher organized and sorted the different codes into potential themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Essentially, this step allows the researcher to analyze the differences in the codes and determine how the codes could form into an overarching theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During this step of the thematic analysis, the researcher determined if the codes within the data could form themes regarding neighborhood family disruption and poverty. Throughout this step of the thematic analysis, it was helpful that the researcher used visual representations to help sort out the differences in codes that evolved into themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Some preliminary codes formed into main themes, while other codes were sub-themes.

Reviewing and naming themes are the fourth and fifth step of the thematic analysis process. This step began when the researcher developed a set of candidate themes in which the researcher refined the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During this step, it became apparent that some themes were not necessarily themes, while other themes might collapse into one whole theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this step of the

thematic analyses process, the researcher carefully reviewed each theme and made sure that the themes were relevant to the topic of the study. Once the researcher was satisfied with each of the themes, the researcher defined and refined the themes in order to present the analyses. By defining each of the themes it is classifying the essence of each theme and what the themes are about (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Lastly, the sixth step of the thematic analysis is producing the report. This step began when the researcher was completely satisfied with the themes and comprises the final analysis and generating the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The task of producing the report is to tell the complicated story within the data in order to convince the reader of the importance and validity of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is essential that the analysis provided a coherent and concise story that the data conveys. Overall, conducting a thematic analysis is particularly meaningful to this study due to the qualitative nature of the study. In addition, the thematic analysis portrayed important themes when it was successfully completed.

In regards to the current study, interviews were transcribed and inputted into NVivo, the researcher began to code each response from the participants. By using the NVivo software, it allowed the researcher to highlight and label parts of the transcribed interviews to identify and note each potential pattern and theme. Once the transcriptions were highlighted and the patterns were noted, the researcher then created top level nodes which are known as themes. When the researcher coded each response accordingly, the researcher then went into each theme to analyze for potential subthemes. The researcher then organized each response per subthemes to accurately analyze the participant's responses. After dragging the responses to the appropriate themes and subthemes, the

data from the interviews revealed three important themes: 1) evidence of disorder, 2) family disruption, and 3) crime/delinquency. For the first theme, participants explained what type of neighborhood they lived in, their living conditions, services, and the challenges they face living in the neighborhood. For the second theme, participants explained the concerns within their family and the relationship between one another. Finally, for the third theme, participants described the crime and delinquent acts that they or someone they know have committed.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore individuals experiencing certain elements of social disorganization theory specifically in their communities which was located in Denver, Colorado. Social disorganization theory attempts to explain the causes of delinquent and criminal behavior in disadvantaged communities. Shaw and McKay (1969) stated that criminality and delinquency did not occur evenly throughout the city, rather it was focused and concentrated in disadvantaged communities that were classified as chaotic communities (Wickes & Sydes, 2017). After conducting in-depth interviews with residents from Summit and Newberry Housing, the researcher used NVivo to conduct thematic data analysis. The researcher first highlighted and noted potential themes from the participant's responses. After highlighting and noting the potential themes, the researcher then dragged each response to the appropriate theme and subthemes that were created. Once the researcher completed coding the responses to the corresponding theme and subtheme, the researcher generated the report that reveals the overarching "story" of the participants. The analyses reveal three major themes: 1) evidence of disorder, 2) family disruption, and 3) crime and delinquency. The subthemes for the evidence of disorder theme are individual's perception of the neighborhood, living conditions, challenges and services in the neighborhood. The family disruption theme consisted of subthemes which were family environment, relationship, and activities with parent/kids. For the last theme, crime and delinquency, there were no subthemes due to

the responses of the participants. Each response pertained to either criminal activity or delinquency acts, therefore, there was no need to have subthemes.

Theme One: Evidence of Disorder

After conducting the in-depth interviews and analyzing the data, the first theme consisted of evidence of disorder. Within this theme, there are four subthemes that examined individual's experiences with social disorganization: perception of the communities, living conditions, services, and challenges in the communities. The evidence of disorder theme refers to the conditions of the communities in which was assessed through aspects of poverty. Researchers have reported that there was a positive correlation between the poverty of where an individual resides and delinquent and criminal activity (Wong, 2011). However, this was only true for certain types of criminal activities. For instance, communities that have high levels of poverty were associated with lower rates of sexual and physical assault (Wong, 2011).

The subthemes that have emerged within the evidence of disorder theme was perception of the communities, living conditions, services, and challenges in the communities. The perception of the communities referred to the participant's views and outlook of the communities in which they reside in. Most of the participants viewed their neighborhood in a criminogenic lens highlighting drive by shootings and gang related activities. The living condition subtheme discussed to the circumstances of the participant's life such as having shelter, food, clothing, etc. The services subtheme referred to any assistance programs that the communities provide. Services establish a sense of order for disadvantaged communities, however, by having services it revealed that there was evidence of disorder within these particular communities in which these

residents relied heavily on. Lastly, the subtheme challenges discussed the difficulties that residents experience and encounter while living in disadvantaged communities. There were a variety of challenges including safety, difficult relationships with property management, resources other than governmental assistances, discrimination among residents, difficult relationships with other residents, and difficult access to transportation.

Perceptions of the community

Hannon (2002) described that criminal opportunity theory recommends that community economic deprivation had a positive effect on individuals and their engagement to delinquency and criminal activity. More specifically, community economic deprivation causes strain to the individuals and disorganization which resulted in property and economic crimes. When the participants were asked to describe the type of the community they lived in, all participants described that the community was mainly for individuals who are low socioeconomic status and the dangerousness of the community itself. All of the participants described that the communities were dangerous due to gang and drug related activities. In addition to gang and drug related activities, participants also explained that there was always a police presence within the community. Some participants explained that this was the only type of living that they could afford and if they had the means they would move out of these types of neighborhoods. Jayden a 26-year-old African American male stated:

Yeah, the community that I live in is [kind of] ghetto. There used to be a lot of gang related activity a couple years ago but now it has calmed down a bit. I mean I hear drive-by [shootings] here and there at night but it's not a lot like it used to

be. Back then there would be drive-by [shootings] and gang member fighting each other almost every other night. It was so bad that my mom didn't want my brother walking home from the bus stop two blocks down the street.

Larry a 33-year-old African American male also described the community as:

Like I said earlier, the community that I live in is a little bit crazy at times. There are kids roaming the streets and disturbing people at their house because they think it's funny. There are always shootings and drive-by [shootings] because of the gangs and drugs that are being sold in the neighborhood. There are always cops being called here. It's literally a never ending cycle with cops, gangs, and people getting arrested and then evicted! During the day is when everything seems to be normal because the housing people are working and at night is when everything goes down.

Most of the participants had similar responses to these two participants, however, Stephanie a 28-year-old Hispanic female described the detrimental effects of what communities like these can do to individuals' success and opportunities:

Yeah, sure. Living in my community can be scary sometimes. There is a lot of gang related activity going on, especially at night. Me and my family have to be aware at all times when we leave our house because you never know when someone is going to go after you. You just have to prepare for the worst at all times. It's sad because there are a lot of kids in my neighborhood who hardly have any opportunities to choose the right path. A lot of people think that we chose this path when that's not the case at all. We just didn't have someone to look up to which made going down the wrong path our only option.

According to the participants, these disadvantaged communities not only negatively affect the individuals with the likelihood in potentially engaging in delinquency and criminal activity, but it also limits the individual's opportunities towards success.

Therefore, participants believed that there was extreme importance in having institutional resources in disadvantaged communities in order to promote to opportunities and success.

After participants described the dangerousness of the neighborhood, participants were followed by questions regarding police presence and whether police were called on after drive by shootings and if police were frequently called on in general. Jayden stated that:

Yeah, the cops are always called in the neighborhood. So you would always see the cops and their lights. Cops coming into this neighborhood was very frequent to the point where it didn't really phase us anymore. Sad to say but that's the truth they're always here whether we like it or not. Sometimes you would see the cops banging on someone's door because they're looking for somebody and sometimes you will see the cops just rolling around looking for something to go down. Cops are always called in this neighborhood but I kind of like it because it gives me a sense of relief that they are here. It somewhat makes me feel a lot safer that they patrol the neighborhood but that is because I am not in trouble with the cops. Like me and my family mind our own business so we're not really scared of the cops but those that are in gangs and stuff they hate the cops and they always shout things out like "fuck the pigs" when they see the cop cars.

When participants explained that police officers were frequently called on and they did frequent patrolling, the participants were then asked if police officer can have a positive impact on the neighborhood if they tried to enforce community policing. Most participant

understood the community policing concept, so their responses came naturally. For participants that did not understand what community policing was, the researcher had to explain and define the concept for them. Participants responded to questions regarding community policing stating that it would help the community by making the community safer and possibly decreasing the gang and drug related activities. Not only would community policing make the community safer and help decrease crime, but it would also increase the relationship between police officer and residents. Jayden further explained:

Oh yeah, most definitely they [community policing] would have a positive impact on my neighborhood because there are a lot of people like me and my family who just mind our own business, so we get really happy when we see the police patrolling the neighborhood make me feel a little bit safer. I wish I would see more of a community policing concept in my neighborhood because it might lower the gang activity in the neighborhood or even reduce the fighting and the overall crime. I just wish that there were more resources like that, that would come in and educate people on why it's not good to be in gangs and stuff like that but I do understand why people join gangs. It's just a hard topic but I would like for there to have community policing, I think it would really help the community be a better place and safer place.

Another participant described that community policing could also be effective at reducing delinquency and crime, however, residents and police officers must trust one another for it to be effective. In addition, the participant notes that having minority officers would be

more beneficial due to their relatable experiences. Amber a 25-year-old Asian female stated:

Hmm, that's a good question. I'm a little confused because I feel like community policing would be a good way in making the community safer, but I know that this community hates and doesn't really trust the police because of the bad experiences that the community has had with the police. Like last summer the SWAT team would just roll in and bust this house making everybody go outside and lay on the ground, like they made a big scene for no reason. They didn't find anything in the house, and when they left, the house that was busted [into] was yelling saying "fuck them pigs" ... Like the cops are very discriminatory towards us and this whole community!! So maybe if we had police officers who are minority and can really understand what these people are going through then yes I feel like community policing would help but if not, like if we have white police officers that hate minorities than it's not [going] work.

In addition to questions regarding community policing, participants were also asked about neighborhood watch to help deter and reduce delinquent and criminal behavior. Some participants stated that neighborhood watch might be effective in these types of communities, however, neighborhood watch may be harder to implement than community policing. Jonah a 50-year-old Hispanic male explains that the neighborhood watch aspect might be harder to implement because people are afraid to take on the position of watching the neighborhood:

I definitely think that [community policing] would work! I don't think neighborhood watch would work in this type of community because I know

people are scared to rat other people out if they saw them do something. Like... we all know the house that sell drugs and do drugs but no one ever reports them. And if we had neighborhood watch than those drug dealers would know that someone snitched. That [is not going to] work maybe community policing [would] but not neighborhood watch. Unless it's a secret person that does that.

Overall, it was clear that participants perceived disadvantaged communities to be dangerous due to the gang and drug related activities. When asked about the communities, participant focused more on the criminal activities within the neighborhood. Additionally, participants believed that community policing would be more effective in potentially deterring delinquent and criminal activity. More so, participants believed that the police officer who were in charge of community policing should be a minority police officer so that the police officer can easily relate to the challenges these residents experience. Lastly, participants believed that neighborhood watch would not be effective in these types of communities because of the safety risk the person would be in.

Living Conditions

According to social disorganization theory, individuals who reside in disadvantaged communities are of low socioeconomic status due to limited opportunities. Cantor and Land (1985) stated that individuals who have difficult living situations due to their socioeconomic status do not engage in crime and deviant acts, rather it was because of their status that they engage in crime and deviant behaviors. When the participants were asked questions regarding their living conditions, if their living conditions were adequate to most Americans, if they had access to basic needs, and their socioeconomic

status, ten of the participants stated that their “living conditions were “pretty good” and “is okay.” However, most of the participants who stated their living conditions to be good described that their living conditions were good now because most of them had jobs that enabled them to provide for the family. When participants explained that their living conditions were good, most of the participants explained that they used to struggle and life was much harder back when they were younger. Jordan a 26-year-old African American male states:

My living condition is pretty good, I’ve got a job now where I can easily buy things that I like and things that we need. When I was younger life was a little harder because my mom was a single mother so my oldest sisters had to get a job at an early age to make ends meet.

Additionally, when participants were asked about their living conditions being adequate to most Americans, all participants stated that even though their living conditions were “pretty good” and “okay,” their living conditions were not sufficient to most American’s living conditions. Most participants stated that their living conditions were not adequate to most Americans because most individuals who live in these disadvantaged communities have to rely on meals from the recreation center and social support services like food stamps, Medicaid, and TANF¹. Participants also explained that their living conditions are not sufficient to most Americans because they live in the “projects” and

¹ TANF is a program that provides Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. This program is grant funded to the state and territories which helps families experiencing financial hardships. TANF provides financial assistance and any related support services such as childcare support, job training, and work assistance. This program strives to assist families to become economically and socially stable (Colorado Works TANF, 2020).

they believe that most Americans have more than what these individuals do in these disadvantaged communities. Stephanie stated:

As for most Americans, I don't think [our living conditions are sufficient] just because we are low income and we live in a neighborhood where most people don't want to live. But I have no choice but to live here because we are low income and we don't make as much money as other people do so when I'm comparing myself to most Americans and I feel like my living conditions is not adequate to most Americans. There are things that I want like a car, but I know I can't get because my family can't afford that. We can barely afford the one car that my dad drives. I feel like my family is okay for what we have already.

After participants were asked whether or not their living conditions were adequate to most Americans, the participants were then asked if they had access to basic needs, such as food, water, sanitation, health care, and any social support services. All participants stated that they had access to basic needs because of the social service programs that are available. The social services programs that the participants described they had were food stamps, TANF, and Medicaid/Medicare. While there are social service programs for these participants, two participants explained that they rely on their kid's school and the meals provided from the recreation center food assistance programs. Lastly, all of the participants in the study stated that they were lower socioeconomic status. Whereas, Lily a 28-year-old White female stated that she considered her family to be lower class as well, but more so of an upper-end of the lower class spectrum. Overall, these individuals living in disadvantaged communities have better living conditions now than what they used to be in the past while residing in disadvantaged communities. Most

of the participants believed that their living conditions were not adequate to the living conditions to most Americans due to their low socioeconomic statuses. While these participants had access to basic needs and social support services, some participants still relied on food assistances from schools and the recreation center.

Challenges

After analyzing the participant's responses, twelve of the thirteen participants responded that safety was one of the main challenge residents who live in disadvantaged communities' experience. Other challenges that residents experience are: difficult relationships with property management ($n = 3$), more resources other than governmental assistances ($n = 1$), discrimination among residents ($n = 3$), difficult relationships with other residents ($n = 4$), and difficult access to transportation ($n = 4$). When participants described that safety was the main challenge living in this type of neighborhood, the researcher conducted follow up questions regarding what the community can do in terms of making the community feel safer and again residents responded with community policing.

Jonah stated:

Um, the challenges would be for sure mine and my family's safety and I guess not being able to really have good friends within this neighborhood. Like we all do our own shit. We don't really talk to nobody.

Amber described the discrimination she and her family had experienced:

Some of the challenges that we face living in this community I feel like is discrimination. Since my family is Asian we are always discriminated against. Like my family has a hard time talking to the office about rent and stuff so they

would get mad because it's hard for my mom to understand why our rent would be what it is. Hmm, overall I feel like the challenges I face are really our safety of me and my family. Like I said it's really hard to hang out outside because we never know what could happen. I don't know I really don't know of any other challenges I face living in this community.

Lily explained that safety and having more resources were a challenge:

I guess the only challenges that I can really think of when living in this community is really safety because this community is quite dangerous and that's the only challenge that I see. I guess some other challenges would be better resources outside of food stamps and Medicaid, like having actual resources for those that are like me and my family who are a little bit higher on the low income scale.

Stephanie stated that transportation and difficult relations with the property manager to be a challenge for her:

I think the main challenge that my family face living in this community is the fact that it is really hard for transportation. Like the bus stop is really far away from our community, and if we want to go somewhere we have to take several bus stops to go there. I also feel like the community we live in the property manager and people that work for the community doesn't understand what we go through being low income because they are always saying we owe more for rent than what we should be.

Julian a 39-year-old Hispanic male described that the challenges he faces was the overall neighborhood. Julian described his anger for the community because he believed that this community was what turned his wife into a drug addict:

Well, first off moving here and trying to make friends within this community really fucked up my family. It made my wife become a drug addict and [she got caught with the drugs so the police] locked her up. So I guess the challenge would be the type of community this place is in the first place. Another challenge would be safety because this neighborhood is [really] dangerous with all the gangs and people selling drugs left and right.

Overall, individuals who live in disadvantaged communities experience a variety of different challenges. The most important challenge participants described was the safety of themselves and their families. Other challenges that participants experienced were having difficult relationships with other resident's/property managers, discrimination among residents, having additional resources other than governmental assistances, and difficulties in transportation. Since the main challenge was safety, it was important to note that participants believed that having community policing could be effective in making the community a safer place to live for individuals residing in these communities.

Services

Services such as institutional resources are extremely important for individuals residing in disadvantaged communities due to the possibility in the reduction of delinquency and criminal activity (Sampson, Morenoff, & Gannon-Rowley, 2002). When the participants were asked about the services the community provided, eleven out of thirteen participants stated that the community provided multiple different services. The

services that the community provided were community meetings, presentations, and workshops regarding certain voting issues. The community member that was in charge of the meetings and presentation will send out flyers with subject suggestions. Residents will then write their four most interested topics and give them back to the person in charge. Once majority of the flyers are returned, the person in charge will then set days for the meetings, presentations, and workshops pertaining those voted subjects. A participant explained that there were also services at the recreation centers and a neighborhood corner store. The services that the recreation center provided were the day care program where the recreation center employee did activities with the kids while the parents are at work. Whereas, the corner store provided free essential food for neighborhood residents. As mentioned earlier in the section, participants have distinguished services as a form of order in a disordered community. Karla a 42-year-old African American female described the services that were provided in these disadvantaged communities:

The services that are provided in this community are a lot. There is the housing program down the street by the elementary school where they hand out flyers saying that there's meetings and there's workshops and presentations of some sort all the time. Um we have the recreation center down the street. Oh yeah, we also have this little market down the street where its considered our corner store, it's was same area, right by the recreation center. That corner store usually gives out free food to those that are low income, sometimes I go there to get milk and eggs and stuff like that. But as of libraries, we don't have a library that's nearby. So the only library that I go to is the library [about 5 minutes away].

Another participant described, during the holidays, especially Christmas and Thanksgiving, the neighborhood gave out Christmas presents and Thanksgiving boxes for families in need. Stephanie stated:

The only services that my community provide[d was] the people that work for the city they usually had people from the neighborhood gather up to come up with the workshops that they have for us. Like for Thanksgiving they usually give out Thanksgiving boxes and for Christmas they usually give out Christmas gifts for families that need it.

As stated above in the previous section, having services and institutional resources are important for residents residing in disadvantaged communities because it can reduce individual influence in the engagement of delinquency and criminality. Not only does community's services and institutional resources reduce crime and delinquent behavior but it also enhances an individuals perceived future opportunities (Weinger, 1998). For instance, some participants described that they were glad to have a recreation center nearby because it kept them busy and it helped them make prosocial friends. In addition, a participant also noted that the recreation center had brought some hope to the individual in attending college because of the inspiring stories from the football coach. Jayden explained:

When I was younger I would take my brothers and sister to go swimming at the recreation center and like play basketball and stuff, but lately I haven't gone to that recreation center just because I work now and I really don't have time to go to the recreation center. But that recreation center is really helpful for kids like me who don't really have a TV or a PlayStation to play with. So yeah, we used to go

to that a lot when we were younger. Plus, [the recreation center] helped us find friends that actually like the same thing we liked, like football. So we would just go to the recreation to play football games against each other. I know these [recreation centers] helped a lot of kids get off the streets, [like] hanging out with the wrong people. We would [have football or basketball] practice and games. It was really fun, the coaches were really nice, they would always tell us stories of when they played football in college and they would always [motivate] us to work hard so that we could play college football too.

Two participants noted that the services that were provided in the communities had really helped them become financially stable. Since being financially stable was difficult for individuals who reside in these communities, the participant explained that she used to steal anything that he could to make a living. Claudia a 25-year-old Hispanic female stated:

[The community] be having all kinds of presentations and workshops for us. I know this because [the community always] sends me flyers [about the meetings the community has] for the week. I don't know if they have those workshops every week, but they have a planned out schedule, saying Monday is this and Tuesday is that. This one time I went to the workshop that talked about financial assistance programs and how to be financially stable and let me tell you, that [presentation] was good. I never knew about [being financially stable or the financial assistance programs]. No one never taught me how to save my money or anything. It was really hard for me before, I would steal anything I could from people's yards and take it to the pawn shop to make a living. I hate to say it but I

had to do what I could to help my family get by you know. But ever since I learned about the assistance programs and how to save my money, it's been so much better and I don't have to steal shit anymore!! No one ever showed me how to apply for food stamps or TANF.

Lastly, a participant explained that they stopped committing crimes because they were scared of getting their housing, food stamps, and TANF revoked and banned. Amber explained:

Yeah, I stopped doing stupid shit because I had a homie that is a felon now and he told me that when he applied for food stamps and TANF the application asked if he's ever been convicted of a crime or something and he put that he got a felony charge and they denied his ass. That goes for the housing and shit too. So I try really hard to just keep to myself and stay out of all that trouble.

Overall, having community services, institutional resources, and governmental assistances was beneficial for individual residing in disadvantaged communities. With the participant's responses, these services can help deter individuals from having to commit certain crimes in order to provide for their families. In addition, these services may also help individuals make prosocial friendships and encourages future opportunities.

Theme Two: Family Disruption

The second theme of family disruption revealed multiple subthemes: family environment, relationships with parents/kids, and activities with parent/kids. Research has indicated that there is a positive relationship between family disruption and delinquency and criminal activities. Conversely, family disruption's correlation with delinquency and criminal behavior comes from many different facets. Family disruption

can be referred to events that disrupt and causes disorder within a family structure (Prevo & Ter Weel, 2015). These specific events that disrupt the structure of a family are single-parent household/female-parent households, divorce, separation, and out of home placements (Prevo & Ter Weel, 2015). Sampson (1987) suggested that aspects of family disruption not only physically caused disorder to the individual family level but also creates further disruption at the community level. In addition, individuals who experience family disruption have higher chances of becoming delinquent, engaging in drug-use, possessing negative personality/social traits, mental illness, and academic adversities (Biblarz & Raftery, 1993; Blumstein, 1986; Prevo & Ter Weel, 2015; Sampson, 1987; Stanick et al., 2017).

The subthemes that emerged within the family disruption are family environment, relationships with parent/kids, and activities with parent/kids. Family environment referred to the differences in modalities in the interaction among family members such as the levels in communication, expressiveness, and issues that may exist between family members (Mirsu-Paun, 2004). For the subtheme relationship with parents and kids indicated the connectedness between the participants and their parents or if the participant is a parent, then the connectedness between them and their kids. Lastly, the activities with parents and kid's subtheme discussed the actions and events that the participants engage in with either their parents or kids. Overall, these three subthemes fall under the family disruption theme because they all relate back to the cohesion of a family and whether a family was disrupted or not.

Family Environment

Most of the participants who were interviewed expressed that their family environment was currently “can be hard” or are “broken.” There were only a few participants who actually had a stable family environment that included both parents in the household. Most participants stated that they only lived with either a mother or a father. Ten out of the thirteen participants stated that they did not have both parents or their spouse in the household. Even though three of the participants described that there were both parents in the household, Jayden described that the father was occasionally absent and Jayden had taken over a larger portion of the parenting role for his younger siblings. Jayden explained:

In my family there are a total of 6 people. Myself, one sister, two brothers, my mother and my father. We grew up very poor and often didn't have money for food or clothes. My parents both worked for temporary agencies when they could find work. My father was loud and some would say didn't set a good example for me to follow in. My mother was a tiny lady who took a larger portion of the parenting role. With my dad always in and out of our house I had taken over a large portion of the parenting role with my siblings since I am the oldest. My parents are currently divorced because they were never getting along and so my mom decided to file the paperwork once I turned 18 years old. So basically, I had to take the responsibility of my father and help provide for the family because with only my mom's income, it was not enough for all of us.

In addition to Jayden having to step up as a parental figure for the younger siblings, Stephanie explained that her family environment was “pretty broken” due to the mother’s infidelity:

Yeah my family environment is pretty broken. My dad is always out hustlin’ [working] while my mom stays home all day to cook and clean which obviously makes her unhappy. My mom has affairs left and right on my dad. So I would say it’s pretty broken. My parents are always fighting; they can’t go a day without yelling at each other. When they yell at each other, my little siblings get really scared so I have to pretend like everything is okay with my parents.

Patterson (1991) emphasized that communities characterized by high levels of single-parent and female headed households are more likely to have individuals engage in delinquency and criminal activities when compared to communities with low levels of single-parent and female headed households. An individuals’ likelihood of engaging in delinquency and criminality are due to the weakness in parent and adult control/supervision (Osgood & Chambers, 2000; Patterson, 1991). Unfortunately, Osgood and Chambers (2000) stated that the burden in monitoring child behavior falls on adults in the household, but more specifically, it falls mainly on the mothers. However, it is extra challenging to monitor child behavior if the mother is a single-parent. Of the thirteen participants, nine participants only live with a mother or are a mother themselves. In addition to the difficulties of single-parent and female-headed households, the behaviors of the parent can also influence the children to engage in delinquent or criminal activities. Julian described the challenges of monitoring his kids while his wife was a drug addict and a drug dealer:

Yeah, my family structure or environment is hectic, I am a single father of three. I have three little boys that are in elementary and middle school right now. Their mom was a drug addict and a drug dealer, so she got caught and has been in prison ever since. It's really hard for me to take care of my kids ever since she got arrested because I don't have the time to find a job and so we basically just live off of food stamps and TANF.

Families with married parents stabilize other social relationships while maintaining and promoting prosocial relationships and activities that could ultimately decrease criminality and delinquency (Porter & Purser, 2010). The difficulties of maintaining control and supervision in single-parent and female headed households are already difficult enough, however, when a parent is engaging in criminal activities or negative behavior it may influence and increase overall delinquent and criminal activities. Altogether, having a positive family environment can potentially decrease the likelihood of criminal activity and delinquency. For instance, Lily described that she has a stable household and supportive parents were her main motivation for success since all her childhood friends turned to gangs and drugs:

My mom and dad always made sure that I was okay and that I was hanging out with the right people when I was younger. They made sure I was not going around and hanging out with the wrong crowd like my childhood friends who are drug addicts. They made sure I went to college and became something. Literally, my mom and dad were my motivation growing up in this type of neighborhood [poor]. I didn't [want to] follow my friend's footsteps and disappoint my parents [in going in the wrong path in life]. My parents came to the United States [as an

immigrant] to give me a better future and I made sure to become successful one day for them.

Relationships

Another subtheme within family disruption was the relationships the participant has with spouse, kids, and parent. Hirschi (1969) argued that it is not important to explain the motivation for delinquent behavior because “we are all animals and thus all naturally capable of committing criminal acts” (p. 31). With that being said, Hirschi (1969) recommended a comprehensive control theory that indicates individuals who have strong social bonds, such as family, institutions, and peers are less likely to commit delinquency and criminality. The four elements to Hirschi (1969) social control theory are: attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief. Hirschi (1969) believed that the individual is less likely to commit delinquency and criminality if the individual has strong ties to each bond. However, if the individuals lack or fails to have strong bonds, the individual is more disposed to criminal activities. As stated above in the previous section, most of the participants who live in a single-parent household or female-headed household may lack the attachment bond with the parent due to the lack of supervision and control. When the participants were asked about their relationships with their parents, five out of thirteen participants stated that they do have a good relationship with the parent or kids (if the participant is a parent themselves). Karla stated that the relationship with her father was difficult because he was not around, but she was thankful to have a supportive mother:

So I only have a relationship with my mom because my dad was never around and he was never in the picture he left my mom when I was like five I think, so he's

never been in the picture. I never talk to him and he just never comes around. The relationship with my mom is good, we fight here and there but I mean who doesn't. I love her and I'm so thankful for everything that she's done for me and my kids, I literally don't know what I would do if she wasn't around.

As noted in the previous section, having supportive parental figure can decrease delinquency and criminal behavior due to the strength of the attachment bond.

Conversely, eight of the thirteen participants stated that they do not have a good relationship with their parent or kids. Chanel a 48-year-old African American female, who was a mother, stated that her relationship with her kids are difficult:

Oh man, my son be pissing me off most of the time that's why he always be coming and going so I don't even know. He got in the mix with the wrong people so he's always on the streets doing God knows what. And my daughter, she's alright. She be talking back to me sometimes but it is what it is.

Another participant explained that the relationship with his father was also difficult because they did not get along. Jayden stated:

Umm, the relationship with my dad is iffy. He's really hard to get along with but I just bite my tongue with him because I don't want things to get worse. He doesn't work and all he does is chill at home. So once my mom and him got a divorce, she made him leave the house and she put a restraining order on him because she didn't want him around the house anymore. So the relationship with my dad is up and down, there's good days and there's bad days but as of right now since he doesn't live with us the relationship is a little bit hard.

Overall, participants highlighted that even in a disruptive household, participants can still have positive relationship with their parents or kids. Not all participants in a disruptive household will have negative relationship with their parents or kids. For instance, Karla had a positive relationship with her mother while her father was absent. In addition, individuals who have prosocial relationships with their parents and peers are less likely to engage in delinquent and criminal behavior. Lily described that she does not engage in crime and delinquency behavior due to her parent's support.

As I mentioned earlier, my parents have done everything for me and they made sure that I wasn't a messed up kid so no, I have never committed a crime because my parents would be so disappointed in me if I did anything. My parents are really supportive in what I want to do after college. They always make sure that I have everything that I need and I'm on the right path because they always say if I committed a crime than it can affect my future since it will be on my record.

Activities with Parents/Kids

Similar to the Hirschi's (1969) social control theory, the activities that the individuals engage in with their parents can affect the likelihood of the individual engaging in delinquent and criminal activity. For instance, individuals who engage in prosocial activities with parents or peers are less likely to engage in delinquent and criminal behavior. Whereas individuals who engage in negative activities with parents or peers are more likely to commit delinquent acts and criminal activity. Most of the participants stated that they conduct normal day-to-day activities with their parents/kids. For the female participants, the activities that they engaged in with either the parent or kids were going shopping, getting their nails done, going to the grocery store, going to

the movies, hanging out, cooking, and going to doctor's appointments. For the male participants, the activities with either parent or kid consist of playing/watching football, going to basketball games, playing outside, and having game nights. Even in some disrupted families, participants were able to engage in some activities with their parent/kids. However, some participants explained that the neighborhood that they live in made it harder for them to engage in certain activities because of the dangerousness of the community. For instance, Jonah explained:

We mainly play video games because I have all boys. Or we go to the recreation center and play football or soccer or basketball together. I like to take them to the recreation center because it's safer there. There was this one time when we were playing outside of the house and there was a drug dealing that had gone wrong and people were arguing and then some guy pulled out a gun. So ever since then we've been scared to play outside of our house.

Another participant also stated the dangerousness of the community and the importance of having a recreation center nearby. Julian described:

I mainly let [my kids] play outside, but I would sit there on the porch and watch them while they're riding their bikes or playing football or soccer. Sometimes I take [my kids] to the recreation center down the street and let them go swimming or let them play basketball too. We love the recreation center because they have a food program that serves food to kids. So it's a good little snack for my kids just because I don't get [paid] much so it really helps out a lot. [The recreation center] is so much safer because it's in a better environment. Like when they are riding their bikes out in front of the house it scares me because they can get hit by a car

or something like that or there could be a drive-by [shooting] and it's just really scary when my kids are playing outside our house. I [just] don't have much for them like I don't have a gaming station or anything.

As described in the above section, these two participant once again noted the importance of institutional resources. A main factor that may enhance criminal activity and delinquency in disadvantaged communities are the shortage of local institutions (Stewart, 2011). Local institutions that may reduce delinquency and criminal activity are “retail outlets, recreation centers, movie theaters, and other business institutions” (Stewart, 2011, p. 467). More specifically, researchers have recommended that these specific local institutions may play an important role in offering resources. In this case, the recreation center was able to provide safety for families that had kids who just wanted to be kids. Not only did the recreation center provide that safety net for the kids to play, but the recreation center also provided one of the participants with snacks for his kids since he relied on food stamps and TANF. Additionally, local institutions such as recreation centers are able to provide the community with stability, social control, and activities that occupy the individuals time (Peterson, Krivo, & Harris, 2000). Not only are these kids attending recreation centers because their parents want to play in a safe environment but the recreation centers are providing them with stability, social control, and most importantly, occupying their times doing prosocial activities.

Theme Three: Crime and Delinquency

The final theme that emerged after conducting the in-depth interviews were crime and delinquent behaviors. Within this theme, the participants were asked questions regarding their criminal and delinquent behaviors such as if the participant or anyone

they knew had ever been arrested, committed a crime, been disrespectful/talked back to parent/peers, gotten trouble at school, and been in a gang.

Crime

According to the in-depth interviews, all of the participants stated that they had been arrested or knew of someone who had been arrested. Four of the thirteen participants described that they were the ones who got arrested. All four of these participants were arrested due to a physical altercation with another person. With that said, the other nine participants stated that they knew of someone who was arrested. These nine participants explained that they knew of someone who got arrested due to physical assaults, drugs, drug dealing, domestic violence, under intoxication with a weapon, and shoplifting. All participants also stated that they had committed or knew of someone who had committed a crime. The crimes that were reported were seven cases of shoplifting and six cases of drugs. The cases regarding shoplifting were for various reasons. Some participants stated that they felt the need to shoplift food and essential items from the grocery store because their family's needed it, while other participants stated that they shoplifted because of the influence of their friends and they need to "fit in." As for the cases regarding drugs, three participants stated that they or someone they knew had a drug addiction problem. The other three participants stated that they or someone they knew sold drugs. Overall, all participants had gotten or knew someone who had gotten arrested or committed a crime within these disadvantaged communities.

Delinquent Behavior

In addition to criminal activity, delinquent behaviors were also asked about during the in-depth interviews. The delinquent behaviors consisted of questions regarding being

disrespectful of parent/peers, been in trouble at school, and affiliation in gangs. All participants described that they or their kids had been disrespectful and talked back to parents and peers. Most of the participants explain that they were sometimes disrespectful and talked back to parents because they were having a bad day, they did not get along, and they were arguing. Karla stated that her son was sometimes disrespectful towards her and teachers:

Yeah like I said earlier, my son has been somewhat disrespectful towards me since he's been talking back a lot but I can't really remember what the reasons are. Some of the reasons are mostly because I don't let him go out and hang out with his friend because I tell him to stay home and do his homework and he would rather just hang out with his friends so I would say that would be the main reason. He has been disrespectful towards teachers because I've gotten phone calls from his teacher is telling me that he is not doing his work in class and that he's talking to his friends. But other than that that's about it my daughter is too young, she is disrespectful sometimes but that's just because she's a baby still.

As for being in trouble at school, all participants explained that they had been in trouble at school. Most have been in trouble for as little as talking too much in class to ditching and getting in fights. Five of the participants described that they or their kids had gotten suspended for their delinquent behaviors. Stephanie described a time she's gotten in trouble at school:

Yeah, the last time I got in trouble at school was when I was caught ditching class. So they suspended me for two days. Another time that I got in trouble at school was when I got in a fight with this girl and I got suspended for a week.

Lastly, when participants were asked if they or their children were a part of any gang organization, eleven participants stated that they themselves were not a part of any gangs, but of the eleven, three participants had children who were part of a gang. Some of the participants stated that they had family members and friends who were a part of a gang. Additionally, two participants explained that they, themselves, were part of a gang. Julian stated he joined his cousin's gang and the activities in the gang consisted of stealing, tagging, and making money:

I joined [the gang] because my cousin was in it and him and all his friends that I was close to at the time told me to join since I was always hanging out with him. We would go tag up some buildings and steal the shit that was in people's yards and sell it to make money. It was nothing serious we were all young and I don't think they even knew what they were doing.

Overall, all of the participants themselves or their children had experienced delinquency through being disrespectful to parents/peers, been in trouble at school, or a part of a gang organization.

Altogether, after transcribing the interviews from the participants and using NVivo to code each individual response, there were three important themes: 1) evidence of disorder, 2) family disruption, and 3) crime/delinquency. The evidence of disorder theme had multiple subthemes; individual's perception of the neighborhood, living conditions, challenges, and services in the neighborhood. The family disruption theme also had multiple subthemes which were family environment, relationships, and activities with parents/kids. To conclude, individual experiencing disorder in disadvantaged communities explained the dangerousness of the community. All participants believed

that the neighborhood was dangerous due to the gang and drug related activities. The gang and related activities caused multiple drive by shootings and violence in the communities per the participant's responses. In addition, the dangerousness of the neighborhood limited residents perceived success and opportunities. Most of the participants described that their living condition to be "pretty good" and "okay." However, all participants believed that they are lower class status and believed that their living conditions were not adequate to most Americans living conditions due to the need of governmental assistance. Twelve participants described that the safety was the one main challenge residents experience. Other challenges consisted of difficult relationships with property managers/other residents, more resources, discrimination, and transportation. Lastly, eleven participants stated the community provides services such as meetings, presentations, and gift services during the holidays. In addition to the meetings and presentation, the communities also have a recreation center and one neighborhood has a corner store.

In addition, most individuals experiencing family disruption explained that their family environment was "pretty broken" and "can be hard." There were a few participants that had a stable family environment. Five participants stated that their relationship between their parent or kids were good, whereas, eight participant stated that they do not have a good relationship with their parent or kid(s). Most of the participants explained that the activities that they engage in with their parent or kid(s) are normal day to day activities. Results indicate that even in a disrupted household, individuals are able to have positive relationships and/or engage in activities with their parent or kid(s).

Finally, all participants responded that they had been arrested or knew of someone that had been arrested. Four participants stated that they had been arrested and the remaining nine participants stated they knew of someone who have been arrested. As for delinquent behaviors, most participants described that they or their kids have been delinquent in the forms of being disrespectful to parents/peers and been in trouble at school. Conversely, eleven participants stated that they had no affiliation in gang organizations, but three participants stated that their children had some sort of affiliation.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Social disorganization theory indicates the causes for delinquency and criminal behavior exist within disadvantaged neighborhoods. More specifically, Shaw and McKay (1969) established that delinquency and criminality did not occur by chance throughout the city, however, delinquency and criminality were concentrated in disadvantaged communities that were chaotic and disorganized (Wickes & Sydes, 2017). Additionally, social disorganization denotes the failure of the community to understand and acknowledge common goals such as control, supervision, or solve any problems that the community may be facing (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003). With that said, social disorganization theory states that, “poverty, residential mobility, ethnic heterogeneity, and weak social networks decree a neighborhood’s capacity to control the behavior of people in public, and hence increase the likelihood of crime” (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003, p. 374). Overall, an individual who resides in disadvantaged communities may experience these specific elements to the degree that may influence the individual to engage in delinquent and criminal activity.

While current research has examined the elements that individuals experience living in disadvantaged communities and the influence those elements have on delinquency and criminality, little is known regarding individuals’ actual experiences with social disorganization in Denver, Colorado communities. The current research only focused on two elements of social disorganization theory: family disruption and poverty.

Previous studies have consistently found that family disruption can influence an individual to engage in delinquent and criminal activity. Family disruptions relationship with delinquent and criminal activity stems from many different aspects. Prevoo and Ter Weel (2015) stated that family disruption can be referred to certain events and occasions within a family structure that causes interference and disorder. As for poverty, research has concluded that there is a positive correlation with residents living in poverty engaging in delinquency and crime (Wong, 2011). Overall, this study's main objective was to qualitatively explore individual's experiences with social disorganization in disadvantaged communities in Denver, Colorado.

The results from the in-depth interviews conducted for this study revealed three important themes in the individuals' experiences. The themes are 1) evidence of disruption, 2) family disruption, and 3) crime/delinquency. Within theme one the participants underscored experience with evidence of disorder such as perception of the community, living conditions, challenges, and community services. The study's findings revealed that a majority of the participants describe their perceptions of the community being dangerous with gang and drug related activities. In addition to participant's responses regarding the dangerousness of the community, participant's also explained the normalcy of intense police presence. According to a participant, police officers are always in the neighborhood when they felt like people were engaging in criminal activity, "they would come and go as they pleased." Many participants believed that the safety of themselves and their families were the main challenge within the communities, therefore, participants believed that effective community policing would help the communities become a safer place to live in. Studies have found that the quantity and quality of police

presence in a community can affect the structural characteristics that may have an influence on the criminal activity within a community (Bernard et al., 2016). Community policing can be effective in disadvantaged communities because it can build the sense of trust between the police officer and the community. However, a participant noted that he believed that community policing would only be effective if the police officers serving the neighborhood were minorities as well. The participant believed that if the police officers serving the community were minorities, they would be more relatable to the residents residing in these disadvantaged communities. This particular finding has become extremely interesting due to the current events that have occurred regarding police brutality against people of color (i.e., George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Eric Garner, Philando Castile, and sadly many more). Studies have shown that minorities are often victims of police shootings, specifically, individuals who are African American (Goldkamp, 1976). Therefore, the participant's suggestion in regards to having minority police officers has become extremely relevant in today's society as these individuals continue to fear more than ever for their safety. With that said, the demographic characteristics of the local law enforcement agency in Denver where these disadvantaged communities are located are: 89 percent males, 11 percent females, 68 percent White, 20 percent Hispanic, 9 percent African American/Black, 2 percent Asian, and 1 percent Native American (Denver Police Department, 2007). Similarly, Wilson, Wilson, and Gwann (2016) stated that having people of color in political office and within police institutions and positions of leadership are extremely influential in creating diversity. Lima (2010) urges police organizations in increasing their operational environment and improving their atmosphere with diverse police leadership because it can enhance

credibility with interactions with individuals of minority community. Not only will a diverse police organization increase the interactions with individuals but it will also increase both service and justice as well as complaints and concerns (Lima, 2010).

Diversity within law enforcement organizations will also increase trust, cooperation, and respect between the community residents that the department serves (Lima, 2010).

Not only should community policing officers be ethnically diverse, there should also be diversity within the police department as a whole. Police work is traditionally centered on poor areas where there are high levels of crime rates, however, many of these poor communities are populated by high levels of ethnic minorities (Cashmore, 2001). Since police officers are traditionally centered in poor areas that are ethnically diverse, community policing or general policing should mirror those communities and areas based on ethnicity.

The results from the evidence of disorder theme also had a correlation with previous research with regard to the positive effect economic deprivation has on individual's engagement to criminal and delinquent acts (Hannon, 2002). Within the poverty theme, the participants were asked to describe their living conditions and community resources. Most participants described that their living conditions were "pretty good" and "okay" but definitely classify themselves as lower income status individuals. Individuals who have difficult living situations are not necessarily engaging in crime and delinquent behaviors, instead it is because of the status these individuals have (Cantor & Land, 1985). For instance, a participant explained that he had to commit crimes (i.e., shoplift) in order to financially take care of his family. However, once the participant found out about the resources that were available to him, he stopped

committing crimes due to the services that were provided. In addition, another participant described that he stopped committing crime in fears of services (i.e., food stamps, Medicaid, and TANF) being completely revoked and evicted from their residence. Most participants described that there are workshops, presentations, and recreation centers that provide resources and services that are beneficial for them. Therefore, having adequate services and/or institutional resources can help deter individuals from potentially engaging in delinquent and criminal activity (Stewart, 2011).

Within theme two of family disruption, interviews revealed subthemes regarding the participant's family environment, relationships with parents/kids, and activities with parent/kid. Individuals residing in these disadvantaged communities expressed that their family environment "can be hard" and are "pretty broken." There were only a few participants who actually had a stable family environment. Most of the participants resided in a single-parent household where it was either the mother or the father. Eight of the participants stated that they do not have a good relationship with their parent or kids. For the participants who do have a relationship with their parent, the activities that they engage in are normal day-to-day activities. Altogether, the results of theme one supported studies indicating that individuals living in disadvantaged communities do indeed experience family disruption. As Krivo and Peterson (1996) stated, disadvantaged communities are characterized by higher levels of family disruption than communities that are not disadvantaged. On another note, individuals who experience family disruption such as single-parent and female headed households are more likely to engage in delinquent and criminal behavior (Patterson, 1991). The likelihood to possibly engage in delinquent and criminal acts are due to the weakened control and adult supervision

(Osgood & Chambers, 2000). In addition, some participants noted that they do not have a good relationship with their parent, which could result in a lack of the attachment bonds. With the attachment bond lacking it could push the individuals to possibly engage in criminality and delinquency. Having a good attachment bond towards parents or peers can promote prosocial values which can decrease the likelihood for crime and delinquency (Hirschi, 1969). Furthermore, participants in this study showed that not only can positive relationships decrease delinquent and criminal activity but it can also increase perceived future opportunities and success.

Lastly, the crime and delinquency theme revealed if the participants or anyone they know have been arrested, committed a crime, been disrespectful, gotten in trouble at school, and either have been or are in a gang. The results conclude that all of the participants stated they or someone they know have been arrested. Four participants describe that they have been arrested due to physical assault. The other nine participants stated that they know of someone who has been arrested due to physical assault, drugs, drug dealing, domestic violence, intoxication with a weapon, and shoplifting. As for delinquent behavior, all participants also stated that they or their kids have been disrespectful to parents or peers. Additionally, 11 participants explained that they themselves are not affiliated with any gang organizations, however, two participants stated that they have been in gangs and one stated that her son is a part of a gang. This theme also corresponds to research regarding social disorganization theory. As previously mentioned, social disorganization theory states that individuals residing in disadvantaged communities experience certain elements that promote and enhance the individuals to engage in criminal and delinquent behavior (Shaw & McKay, 1969). As stated above,

individual's engage in criminal and delinquent activity due to their families being disrupted or the poverty conditions of the neighborhood influences the individual to commit crime. Overall, this theme also supports research in that individuals residing in disadvantaged communities who experience family disruption and poverty are more inclined and influenced to engage in crime and delinquent acts.

All in all, individuals revealed that the hardships that were experienced living in disadvantaged communities were the reason some of them committed delinquency and criminality. Chanel was considered to have a broken home stated that she believed her son was selling drugs because he had "nothing else to lose" since his dad was already in prison. However, Lily stated that she does not engage in any delinquent and criminal activity due to the support from both her parents. These findings correlate with past research in the aspect that having a positive attachment bond with parent or peers could possibly reduce an individual's engagement in criminality and delinquency. Hirschi (1969) believed that the attachment bond was the most important element described as the affection for and sensitivity to others. Without the affection and sensitivity to others an individual is more likely to engage in crime, which was true for some of the participants in this study. In comparison to family disruption, some participants stated they have engaged in criminality and delinquency due to economic hardship and living conditions they experienced. Jordan explained that she shoplifted because her family was poor and could not afford any Christmas presents. Other participants also stated that they have shoplifted, stole property/drugs to support their families living conditions. This current finding also relates to past research in the sense that living in poverty increases an individual's likelihood of criminal and delinquent behavior (Pare & Felson, 2014). For

instance, people who are of low socioeconomic status are more likely to commit crime due to the opportunities for legitimate attainment of shared objectives or they have been exposed to varieties of negative experiences (Pare & Felson, 2014). This is especially true for the participants in this study because they were exposed to criminality everyday residing in these disadvantaged communities. In addition, poor people may also commit criminality and delinquency in order to handle their grievances due to the lack of access to social services (Black & Reiss, 1970).

Lack of access to social services was also supported in this current study. For example, Claudia noted that she had to commit crime in order to support his family since he was not aware of any social services. Lastly, individuals experiencing poverty and economic adversities may be influenced to partake in violent and deviant subcultures (Anderson, 2000). Their socialization experiences have swayed their attitudes in encouraging crime (Anderson, 2000). Socialization experiences influencing individual's behaviors towards criminality and delinquency was also present in the participants in this study. For instances, Chanel stated that her son was also committing crime due to the deviant subcultures (i.e., he was in a gang) that influenced him. Overall, the findings to this current study supports past research with regard to individual's experiences in disadvantaged communities.

Limitations

The results to this research suggested that individuals residing in disadvantaged communities do indeed experience elements of social disorganization theory; however, there were also limitations to this current study. There were two important limitations in this study which include sample size and the elements of social disorganization theory.

The first limitation from this analytical study was the sample size. Due to the qualitative nature of this study, the number of individuals who participated in the study was incredibly small compared the number of individuals who actually live in these communities. Since the sample size was relatively small, the findings are only limited to the individuals who decided to participate in the study. Therefore, the findings only indicate the experience of residents in the two disadvantaged communities in Denver, Colorado. After each interview, the researcher would analyze the data to see if the interviews have reached saturation. Since the goal of this study was to voluntarily obtain participants, the information that was provided was sufficient enough to conclude the amount of individuals who participated (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). Qualitative studies commonly consist one to 30 informants (Bengtsson, 2016).

Lastly, this study is limited due to the specific elements that were assessed. This study does not assess all of the components of social disorganization theory because it only focused on the family disruption and poverty elements. Consequently, the findings to this study are only restricted to individuals favoring in the family disruption and poverty elements of the social disorganization theory. The family disruption and poverty elements were the main focus in this study due to the existing statistics of the communities. As described in the method section, these communities have high levels of single family and female headed households. Poverty was also a focus in this study due to the poverty rates of these communities in which they fall below the average poverty rate of the city. Since there were existing statistics that essentially support part of the social disorganization theory, family disruption and poverty seemed to be the best elements to focus on in comparison to residential mobility, heterogeneity, etc.

Future Research Recommendation

Based on the findings of this research, there are several suggestions that can be offered for future researchers to explore. As previously discussed, a main limitation of this study was its small sample size. Future research should attempt to build on these results by conducting quantitative analyses of these social disorganization elements. By conducting and attempting to change the format of this study, researchers may obtain more participants which will ensure more results. With obtaining a larger sample size future researchers should conduct surveys in order for the results to be somewhat generalizable to other disadvantaged communities. Not only will the quantitative approach obtain more participants, but also obtaining data will also be quicker and cost-effective in the execution. The quantitative approach will also increase the reliability, validity, and generalizability in the prediction of cause and outcome (Cassell & Symon, 1994). In addition, having the quantitative nature will allow for a value-free study where the researcher cannot exert biases, values, and subjective preferences. Since the study was exploratory, it only focused on the inductive reasoning approach where the researcher develops conclusions based on pre-existing data and information into theories (Bengtsson, 2016). With that said, this study provided an understanding to only individuals experiencing family disruption and poverty.

Another recommendation for future research is exploring the experiences of other important members within the communities. For instances, future research should also include property managers, office workers, and maintenance workers. Similar to McCarty (2013), who examined residents, property owners, and manager to fully understand their entire experiences of those individuals within the mobile home communities and the

contribution to the social ties and crime rates. By including other community members, the researcher will be able to have a better understanding of the experiences of everyone involved in the community.

Finally, future research should attempt to explore all elements of social disorganization theory to have a better understanding of individuals experiences. Since this study only focused on family disruption and poverty, the findings can only speak to those two elements. Therefore, future research should also include the other social disorganization elements to fully capture the individual's experiences and influences to delinquency and criminal activity.

Policy Implications

Furthermore, in order to effectively create policies and social programs, future studies will need to examine social disorganizations detrimental effects on disadvantaged communities. The desired impact from this study is to provide information regarding the experiences of individuals residing in disadvantaged communities to the criminal justice system. Providing adequate information to the criminal justice system will better equip individuals working within it. This study revealed three major themes that underscored individual's experiences in disadvantaged communities. To reiterate, the three themes are family disruption, poverty, and crime/delinquent acts. Previous studies indicated that individuals experiencing family disruption are more likely to engage in criminality and delinquency (Prevo & Ter Weel, 2015). With that being said, the aspect of family disruption not only affects the individual at the family level but it further creates disruption at the community level (Sampson, 1987). A recommended policy implication for individuals experiencing family disruption, poverty, and crime/delinquency are

mentoring and therapy programs that can help individuals cope with any family issues that exist, such as the Big Brother Big Sister of America mentoring program that serves individuals living in disadvantaged communities (Grossman & Tierney, 1998). Big Brother Big Sister of America helps decrease individual's anti-social activities while increasing prosocial behaviors in academics, relationships, self-concepts, and social/cultural enrichment. Therefore, having a program that targets the individuals needs may become helpful for individuals experiencing hardships when living in disadvantaged communities. In addition, it may help individuals in reducing delinquent and criminal behaviors.

In addition to mentoring programs, having adequate institutional resources for individuals experiencing family disruptions and poverty may be beneficial. Participants stated that the institutional resources that are available to them are extremely helpful in many ways (i.e., safety, food assistance, etc.). Participants expressed their gratitude towards the available institutional resources and some even stated that they would not know how to feed their kids if there were no resources available. Researchers have suggested that local institutions play a critical role by offering resources that contribute to the development of informal networks, reduction in crime/delinquency, and enhancement and improvement in the overall life outcomes of the residents (Ludwig, Duncan, & Ladd, 2003; Stewart, 2011). Additionally, disadvantaged communities struggle in attracting and maintaining local institutions that hinder criminal behavior and delinquency by providing the community with stability, social control, and alternate activities that occupy resident's time (Peterson, Krivo, & Harris, 2000). In addition, communities that lack strong viable institutional resources contain fewer conventional role models as well as less formal and

informal mechanisms for controlling and monitoring crime and delinquency. The primary goal of local institutions should be to mediate between disadvantage and criminal activity (Peterson et al., 2000). Libraries and recreation centers provide places and activities where residents are able to come together to create a sense of cohesiveness. More specifically, these local institutions offer structured activities that allow residents to gather in a setting that encourages and facilitates the sharing of common goals and values. As this occurs, the community network aspect is likely to increase and form in order to achieve a controlled function (Peterson et al., 2000). Local economic institutions, such as retail stores and banks, may assist in stabilizing the community by also offering a place to gather and community oversight. In addition, these economic institutions may provide employment for the residents who, in turn, operate as a conventional role model in which disadvantaged neighborhoods lack. With the presence of employment and retail establishments within disadvantaged neighborhoods, it will further increase and help connect local areas with larger political and economic institutions (Peterson et al., 2000). These larger political and economic institutions are business associations, governmental agencies, social service organizations, and local law enforcement. Having economic institutions may improve the ability of disadvantaged neighborhoods to gain services and protection that will decrease crime and delinquency. In addition, the existence of economic institutions may allow the disadvantaged neighborhood to appear viable to outsiders and residents will feel like the neighborhood is an adequate place to reside. Thus, there are visible indicators that demonstrate the disadvantaged neighborhood is “in control” (Peterson et al., 2000, p. 35).

Another recommended policy implication for individuals residing in disadvantaged communities is having effective community policing. Community policing was noted by several participants in the study. Participants stated that they would feel safer if there were regular police officers in the communities. A participant stated that minority police officers would be more effective in the community policing realm due to the shared values and experiences between minority police officers and residents. With that said, community policing can be successful at reducing delinquency and criminal activities through the relationship that is built between the residents and law enforcement officers (Bernard et al., 2016). Not only can community policing decrease delinquent and criminal activity in the community, but it can also increase informal social control. Community-oriented policing is implemented to support and increase the contacts between community residents and the local police officers. Theoretically, police officers become “engaged with citizens to develop neighborhood peace and security” (Kelling, 1987, p. 94). Additionally, Thurman (1995) states the importance of community-oriented policing is “public good is best served when present-day police services promote future-oriented crime prevention” (p. 176). Community policing usually focuses on partnerships, equal treatment, and respect in cultural differences and priorities (Kearns, 2017). With community policing agencies focusing on those three elements, it is promising that the police-citizen relationships will be strengthened. In addition to creating strong relationships, community policing can also reduce public perceptions of disorder while also enhancing public support for law enforcement officers (Gill, Weisburd, Telep, Vitter, & Bennett, 2014). Community policing emphasizes resident and police interaction as an effort to deformalize the formal instruments of social control

(Hawdon & Ryan, 2003). With the emphasis on citizen input, in-person interactions between officers and residents, and services based on local norms, the community-oriented policing approach attempts to combine the police into the community's primary groups. These primary groups within a community are sometimes the informal social control groups that have established before police presence. If the police officers are successful at integrating into the community, the police officers can effectively utilize the established informal networks in order to diffuse any delinquent acts and criminal behavior before they actually happen or solve the crimes that do occur. Overall, community-oriented policing can help reduce crime and delinquency within disadvantaged neighborhoods that experience social disorganization.

Lastly, adverse communities that experience social disorganization may overcome any challenges if there is a form of social ties. Theorists argue that having neighborhood local network structure will reduce and alleviate criminal activity and delinquency. For instance, Sampson and Groves (1989) found that there were inconsistencies between local friendships and crime. Friendship networks had a positive association in reducing specific crime. The crimes that were reduced as a result of local friendship networks were mugging, burglary, and street robbery. In addition to Sampson and Groves' (1989) results, Warner and Rountree (1997) concluded that local social ties also have a negative impact on crimes such as assault. While effective social ties can decrease certain crime, social ties can also increase informal social controls within neighborhoods. Social ties provide residents with a mechanism in which shared conventional beliefs are created. By increasing the social ties within disadvantaged neighborhoods, cultural aspects are more

likely to increase. Neighborhoods with a strong cultural aspect provide additional opportunities for residents that demonstrate conventional values.

All in all, individuals who experience hardships such as family disruption, poverty and criminal and delinquent activity in disadvantaged communities may benefit from having mentoring/therapy programs, institutional resources, community policing, and social ties. Mentoring and therapy programs can provide assistance to individuals by helping them cope with any existing family and living issues one may experience. Institutional resources offer a safe place for residents to gather and form prosocial networks. Participants within this study have supported the idea of institutional resources when the participants explained that they prefer taking their kids to the recreation centers so they can safely play basketball or football. Community policing can help the community become safer while maintaining positive relationships with local law enforcement officers. As discussed above, community policing would be effective if the law enforcement officers reflect the ethnicity of the community for better relations with the residents. Lastly, disadvantaged communities creating social ties will increase local friendship networks while decreasing criminal and delinquent behaviors.

Conclusion

This current study primarily explored social disorganization theory elements, specifically, family disruption and poverty in Denver, Colorado communities. There were no significant differences between the two communities. Participants from both communities revealed that they indeed experience family disruption and poverty while residing in disadvantaged communities. Individual who experienced these elements had a more negative life perception due to their struggles and hardships they encountered on a

day to day basis. More specifically, some participants believed that the hardships they experienced while living in the disadvantaged communities were the reason they engaged in criminal activity and delinquency. The findings from this current study supports past research in regards to individuals experiencing hardships that may influence an individual's engagement in crime and delinquent behaviors. Therefore, the policy implications that were noted in this study can be extremely helpful for helping individuals who reside in disadvantaged communities overcome adversity which could potentially decrease the engagement in criminal activity and delinquency.

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APPENDIX A
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



Institutional Review Board

DATE: March 5, 2020

TO: Tiffanie Pham, BA
FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [1556971-2] Exploring Experiences with Social Disorganization in Denver Communities
SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: APPROVAL/VERIFICATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: March 5, 2020
EXPIRATION DATE: March 5, 2024

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB approves this project and verifies its status as EXEMPT according to federal IRB regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records for a duration of 4 years.

If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Morse at 970-351-1910 or nicole.morse@unco.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB's records.

APPENDIX B
CONSENT FORM



CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPATIONS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Project Title: Exploring Experiences with Social Disorganization in Denver Communities

Researcher: Tiffanie Pham, BA., School of Humanities and Social Science

Research Advisor: Brian Iannacchione, PhD., School of Humanities and Social Science

Phone: (720) 789-0393

Email: Tiffanie.pham@unco.edu

Purpose and Description: The primary purpose of this study is to explore individual's experiences with social disorganization in Denver communities.

Individuals who wish to participate will be asked to complete an intensive interview that may last 30-40 minutes. This intensive interview will obtain questionnaires about the environment the individuals resides in, personal questions regarding the individual's family, and lastly, questions about crime and delinquency. These questions are administered in order to determine if the individual resides in a disorganized community and if the individuals commits criminal or delinquent activity. During the intensive interview, I will ask permission to audio record the interview for accurate data collection. However, if you are not comfortable being audio-recorded than I will just take notes of your responses on the interview guide.

At the end of the study, we would be more than welcoming in sharing the results of the study with you at your request. I, the researcher will take every precaution in order to fully protect the confidentiality of your participation within this study. I will assign pseudonyms (fake names) for the community you reside in. Along with pseudonyms, I will also assign numeric identifier for your interview that you complete. The numeric identifier will correspond with the community you reside in. Only I will know the community's name connected with the participant's numeric identifier. Data collected and analyzed for this study will be kept on a password protected computer, which is only accessible by the researcher.

The potential risks in this study are minimal. The risks included in this study are discomfort, anxiety, embarrassment, and stress. You may encounter any of these risk while answering questions during the intensive interview. To counter the risks, I will allow breaks during the interview to make sure that you are comfortable and able to recuperate with the interview questions. In addition, if you become too uncomfortable and stressed, you may choose to stop participating in the study at any given time.

Upon completion of the study, you will be entered in a raffle for the chances of winning a twenty-dollar gift card. Cost to the participants may include expenses associated with transportation to and from the data collection site if the participants do not feel comfortable having the interview conducted in their homes.

Participation is voluntary. Participants may be 18 years and older to partake in this study. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please complete the questionnaire if you would like to participate in this research. **By completing the questionnaire, you give your permission to be included in this study as a participant.** You may keep this form for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact Nicole Morse, Research Compliance Manager, Office of Research, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910.

Additionally, if you have any questions or concerns about your participation, please contact myself, Tiffanie Pham or my research advisor Brian Iannacchione.

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Thank you for participating in this study!

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interviewee Number _____
Interview Date _____

Exploring Social Disorganization in Denver Communities
Interview Guide

Project Director Project: Tiffanie Pham

Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice
University of Northern Colorado
Greeley, Colorado

As you may know, I am conducting a study on individuals who reside in disadvantaged communities and their life experiences and opportunities. Specifically, I am focusing on the elements of social disorganization theory – family disruption and poverty.

It is important to understand that this interview is completely voluntary and confidential. Your decision to participate in this study, or not, will be entirely respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise permitted. Participating in this study will require answering questions about the community you reside in, the perceptions you have on the community, and your family relations.

If at any point during the interview you feel uncomfortable, we can stop or pause the interview. If I ask you any questions in which you do not want to answer, please let me know and we can proceed to the next questions. Please do not hesitate to ask me any questions for clarifications. This interview may take 40 minutes to an hour depending on your responses.

Before we start with the interview, I would like to read over the consent form. If you consent to participate with this study, please sign both copies of the consent form – one for your records and one for me.

The interview is divided into three parts. The first part asks about your family environment and the second part asks about the neighborhood environment. The last part asks about your involvement in crime and delinquent acts. If you confess to any crime that will happen in the future, I am required to report that to the police. With your permission, I would like to audio record all parts. If you do not feel comfortable being audio recorded, then I will quickly write down your responses to the interview.

➤ Before we begin, can you tell me how it's like living in this community?

PART I: FAMILY DISRUPTION

➤ Describe your family environment

➤ How is your relationship with your parents?
○ If you're a parent, how are the relationship with your kids?

➤ How are your parent's relationships? (i.e., married, single, or divorced)
○ If you're a parent, how is the relationship with your spouse?

- What activities do you engage in when you spend time with your parents?
 - If you're a parent, what activities do you engage in when you spend time with your kids?

- How is your relationship with your siblings?

PART II: POVERTY

- Can you please describe the community you live in?

- Can you please describe your living conditions?

- Do you think your living condition is adequate to most Americans? Why or why not?

- Do you have access to basic needs, such as food, water, sanitation, health care, and any social support services? If so, what services and basic needs do you have access to?

- How would you describe your social economic status? (lower class, middle class, high class)

- What are some challenges you face living in this community?

- Can you describe the services your community provides?

PART III: CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

- Tell me about the times you or someone you know got arrested.

- Have you or someone you knew committed a crime? If so, describe a time when you or someone you knew committed a crime.

- What were the reasons why you or someone you knew committed crimes?

- Describe a time where you talked back to your parents or guardian. How often did you talk back to your parents? What were the reasons that you talked back to your parent?
 - If you're a parent, describe a time when your child(ren) talked back to you? How often do they talk back to you? What were the reasons that your child(ren) talked back to you?

- Describe a time when you were disrespectful to your parents, teachers, and peers. What were the reasons that you were being disrespectful to your parents, teachers, and peers?
 - If you're a parent, describe a time when your child(ren) were disrespectful to you, teachers, or their peers. What were the reasons that your child(ren) was being disrespectful to you, teachers or peers?

- Have you ever been in trouble at school? If so, describe a time when you got in trouble at school.
 - If you're a parent, has your child(ren) ever been in trouble at school? If so, describe a time when your child(ren) got in trouble at school?

- Are you a part of any gang organization? If so, please describe why you decided to join the gang and the activities of the gang.
 - If you're a parent, are you or your child(ren) a part of any gang organization? If so, please describe why you decided to join the gang and the activities of the gang.

APPENDIX D
SNOWBALL SAMPLE DIAGRAM

Snowball Sample Diagram

