

INCOME SEGREGATED NEIGHBORHOODS AND VIOLENCE:

A PARADIGM SHIFT

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CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to a few key people in my life. First, to my parents Julie and James; every single decision you both made as parents led me to where I am now. There are no words to express the love and appreciation I have for you both, but I hope you know it and feel it daily.

To my siblings Vince, Ashley, Aliyah, and Maliyah; I want to live the best life for all of you. My youngest siblings, Aliyah and Maliyah, you were both at the core of this thesis. As I saw you growing and becoming more independent in this world, I wanted to do everything I could to make it as safe of an environment as possible for the two of you. I wanted you both to be able to live in a community where you felt safe enough to play and do all the great things children need to do to expand their minds. I hope you continue to do wonderful things in your lives, you are both the light of my life.

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you catch me each and every time I fall apart (which has been often these past few months). You are my strong side, the side that does not give up, the side that keeps me going. I have loved you for such a long time, and through this process I have loved you even harder. Thank you for being who you are, I love you so much.

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ABSTRACT

Many neighborhoods in the United States are affected by segregation, including by race, ethnicity, or income. One of the major consequences of income inequality is low-income violence prone neighborhoods. The purpose of this study was to examine how residents defined violence in their neighborhoods, what strategies were being used by the residents to navigate through violence, and what the resident thought needed to be done to address violence on a micro, mezzo, and macro level. This was a qualitative, grounded theory study, in which data were collected through focus groups or one-on-one, face-to-face interviews with residents in violence prone, income segregated neighborhoods. There were 7 participants who took part in the study and who were at least 18 years old. The data showed complex forms of violence in these neighborhoods. The residents talked extensively about the role of community organizations, the city, and the major corporations in the neighborhood can play to promote safety in the neighborhoods. They emphasized the need for political advocacy and organizations/professionals to help them organize and fight for social change and collective safety. Social work practice, policy, and education implications all include a need to shift the current micro-focused paradigm to include more emphasis on macro social work. Future research recommendations include the need for participatory action research (PAR) and research that allows for more time to do a thorough grounded theory study on this topic.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Many neighborhoods in the United States are affected by segregation, whether it be race, ethnicity, or income. While race and ethnicity played a monumental and historical role in neighborhood segregation, income inequality encompassed all races and ethnicities. Robert Reich talked about income inequality in the film *Inequality for All* (Kochhar & Fry, 2014); Reich stated that, “The United States has one of the most unequal distributions of wealth in the world.” According to an Executive Income Summary, in 2013, the top one percent of families nationally made 25.3 times as much as the bottom 99 percent in the United States (Someiller et al., 2016). Given this, there is no wonder why neighborhoods are so incredibly segregated. Low wages, high costs of living, high income taxes, health care costs, child care costs, and the cost of higher education, are all contributors to income inequality in America (Kornbluth, 2014). Further, Watson (2009) suggested that there is a strong relationship between income inequality and neighborhood segregation. The following research has shown that issues such as home prices, rent, and systemic racism are some of the elements of why neighborhoods are segregated by income.

Home prices and rent are major contributors to income segregation of neighborhoods. In fact, when countless people are already struggling with trying to

make ends meet, high housing prices and high rent costs have the potential to exclude low income and working class people from buying a home, thus leaving home buying opportunities more to the wealthy (Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University (JCHS), 2010). A 2011 study showed that the median annual income of homebuyers was \$72,200 (Lautz, 2011) and the median annual renter income in 2012 was \$31,888 (Miller, 2014). With the average income in 2014 being \$46,481 (Social Security Administration, 2013), many people were only able to afford rental homes or apartments. More than half of renters are of low income, while nearly 87% of those in a higher income bracket own homes (JCHS, 2010). The same JCHS (2010) study showed that neighborhoods with high numbers of renters and fewer home owners tend to have a higher concentration of minorities and immigrants.

Along with the high cost of home buying and renting, systemic racism played a role in income segregated neighborhoods. The gap in annual income between Blacks and Whites was at its highest point since 1989, at which time Whites had 17 times the wealth of Black households (Kochhar & Fry, 2014). Additionally, research has shown that the median household income of Hispanic renters was approximately 15 percent lower, and those of Black renters was 30 percent lower than those of Whites (Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, 2010). These statistics are merely a fraction of the numerous ways Black Americans and other minority groups experienced racism, and it has a profound effect on neighborhood segregation.

There are numerous concerns associated with segregated, low-income neighborhoods: being densely populated, residents lacking a sense of community, and a dearth of resources such as schools, recreational activities, and health care are some of the concerns that may lead to some neighborhoods being more prone to violence (Vargas, 2013). For example, research has shown that living in a densely populated, low-income neighborhood can have a negative effect on an individual's physical and mental health as well as their overall life satisfaction (Roy, Hughes, & Yoshikawa, 2012). Studies have shown that drug and alcohol abuse are some ways that people cope with issues such as depression, which tends to be more prevalent in these low-income, violence-prone neighborhoods (Roy, Hughes, & Yoshikawa, 2012). A study that examined substance use in relation to violence concluded that alcohol use preceded violent incidences 100 percent of the time and that various drug uses preceded violent incidences 100 percent to 70.6 percent of the time, depending on the type of drug used (Stoddard et al., 2015).

The second concern associated with these low-income, violence-prone neighborhoods was the lack of a sense of community. As stated before, many of these neighborhoods are comprised of immigrants or other minority groups; groups who may feel out of place. For example, in a study of Hispanic and African American residents in Metro Boston area, participants reported feeling unwelcome or out of place due to their race; stating that they had been confronted with some type of discrimination at least a few times per month. Some of the types of discrimination

described by these residents included White realtors hindering access to good housing, employment discrimination, being treated with less respect, being offered worse service, and being called names or insulted (Louie, 2005). These discriminatory acts could lead to a lack of a sense of community. Lacking a sense of community and perceived protection within one's community has been linked to gang involvement (Stone, 1990) and depression (Vega et al., 2011).

The third concern Vargas (2013) identified is a lack of access to resources such as schools, recreational activities, and health care. Children born into low income neighborhoods have been shown to have fewer opportunities to develop their own talents as compared to children born into more income privileged families. Children born into higher-income families have access to better schools and have the ability to draw on family networks and neighborhood connections for better jobs (Krueger, 2012). A lack of available recreational activities was also linked to gang involvement with youth living in low-income neighborhoods (Stone, 1990).

The fourth concern related to income segregated, low-income neighborhoods, and the focus of this study, was violence. Some of the above concerns, such as gang involvement and drug use, contributed to neighborhood violence. A 2007 study showed that a person's perception of economic inequality between themselves and those around them has led to a higher chance of violence (Hipp, 2007). Wolf et al. (2013) suggested that disparities in economic resources have led to resentment and animosity towards others, resulting in criminal and violent behavior. Potential

consequences of neighborhood violence included a negative impact on the emotional and behavioral wellbeing of children and adolescents (Overstreet, 2000), as well as a lack of an overall sense of safety within one's neighborhood (Vargas, 2013).

One major reason of why violence in these income segregated neighborhoods has been so imperative and requires examination is the effects living in this type of environment have on the youth residents. In a 2009 survey, one-quarter of children surveyed had witnessed some type of community violence; the percentage rose as the age group increased, meaning as children age to adulthood they are more prone to being exposed to violence within their neighborhood (Finkelhorn et al., 2009). This puts the youth at risk for engaging in behaviors such as those previously noted in this chapter: drug and alcohol abuse, gang involvement, and having mental health issues such as depression.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2016) noted violence as a serious public health problem, with economic hardship being a risk factor of youth violence. The CDC also stated its commitment to preventing violence before it begins; however, there are minimal preventative measures taken for addressing economic risk factors. One attempt at combating income segregated neighborhoods has been the implementation of mixed-income housing developments. These housing developments are categorized as, "publicly subsidized multifamily rental housing developments, in which the deliberate mixing of income groups is a fundamental part of the development's operating and financial plans" (Anderson et al., 2016, p. 52).

The effectiveness, however, of these housing developments was unable to be concluded due to the lack of comparable statistics.

Not only was violence on the rise, the current paradigm of handling violence in these income segregated neighborhoods was increasingly more punitive and aggressive. Nearly half (46.3%) of the total inmates in prison in the United States were people serving a sentence for a drug offense, 4.5% were serving for burglary, property, and larceny offenses, 3.1% were serving for homicide, aggravated assault, and kidnapping offenses, and 3.8% were serving for robbery offenses (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2016). Not only were these crimes leading to people being put into prison, they also resulted with people dying. From 2003 to 2009 there were more than 4,800 arrest-related deaths in the United States (Office of Justice Programs, 2012).

What was lacking was a conversation at a community level with the stakeholders, the residents of high-crime, income segregated neighborhoods, and their collective thoughts about what needed to happen to promote change and safety as well as what was already being done at a community resident level. Therefore, those conversations were the purpose of this study.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine strategies (as defined by the residents of segregated, low-income neighborhoods) that were being used by the residents to deal with violence or the consequences of violence as well as what the resident thought needed to be done to address violence. For the purpose of this study,

participants defined what violence meant to them and their experiences that painted a picture of violence within their neighborhood. Along with looking at resident defined coping strategies, residents' recommendations of what needed to happen in order to decrease violence and increase safety were considered. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do residents of income segregated neighborhoods define violence?
2. How do residents navigate their way or cope with this violence in low-income neighborhoods?
3. What do residents in segregated, low-income neighborhoods think needs to happen to promote safety in their neighborhoods on a micro, mezzo, and macro scale?

This was an exploratory, qualitative study which used grounded theory design, in order to explore the above research questions as well as to consider any new information or issues that were identified by the residents. Data were collected through focus groups or individual interviews with current or past residents in violence-prone, low-income, income segregated neighborhoods.

Significance of the Study

Current research focused on the problems with high-crime, low-income neighborhoods, rather than on what residents themselves were already doing to navigate their way through living in these neighborhoods. The way that the researcher approached this study was not coming from a deficit paradigm, rather a strengths and

resiliency paradigm. It was predicted that the first round of questioning of the residents may have resulted in a common theme of conditioned responses learned from society (i.e. more policing, and stricter laws); the hope was that the second set of interview questions would be written to elicit more of an individualistic point of view of the residents about what needed to happen in their neighborhoods. This way of approaching grounded theory had the potential of reducing the impact of oppressive methodologies of research wherein the researcher approaches the issue with preconceived ideas or asks questions in ways that elicit socially conditioned responses. The research also provided an opportunity for the residents to collectively play a role in the issue, as opposed to the current status quo of programs and policies that were implemented from the top-down, which is ineffective. With these socially conditioned and individualistic responses about the residents' current and active roles, as well as what they envisioned needed to be done, the current deficit based paradigm had the potential to shift to a strengths, resiliency, and active participation paradigm in creating future social policy and research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The overall goal of this chapter was to examine what past literature has stated about ways which residents in income segregated, violence prone neighborhoods define violence, cope or navigate their way through violence, and what they think should be done to address the violence on a micro, mezzo, and macro scale. Past research has been overwhelmingly problem-focused rather than solution-focused. Thus, this section will attempt to give the most detailed review of research within the subject area.

Definition of Violence

Before discussing the definition of violence, it is important to talk about the context and structural issues that set the foundation for violence. These factors are more prevalent in segregated neighborhoods and play a significant role in the disproportionate violence and crime statistics.

City Amenities

In neighborhoods that have existing violence such as gangs and gun violence, there are factors that provide the context for violence to occur; one of these factors is the lack of functional city amenities. City amenities such as street and sidewalks lighting are 24% less prevalent in low income neighborhoods, sidewalk are 41% less prevalent in low income neighborhoods, traffic calming devices such as speed bumps

are five percent less prevalent in low income neighborhoods, and marked crosswalks are six percent less prevalent in low income neighborhoods (Parsons, Besenyl, Kaczynski, Wilhelm, Stanis, Blake, & Barr-Anderson, 2015). Consequently, pedestrians are twice as likely to be struck and killed by vehicles in lower income neighborhoods versus higher income neighborhoods due to the lack of appropriate street safety amenities such as crosswalks and street lights (Maciag, 2014). Thus, the lack of safety amenities in income segregated neighborhoods clearly provides a context for these residents to suffer the consequences such as death.

Segregation and Violence

Segregation is power, actual, against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation, this is a form of implicit violence. Besides racial and ethnic segregation, other types of segregation include: income segregation, educational segregation, and occupational segregation (Florida & Mellander, 2015). Segregated neighborhoods often face distinct circumstances such as houses becoming vacant, which can lead to rodent infestation and arson, unreliable trash pickup, and road deterioration; this increases segregation by motivating those who are able to leave to move away, leaving the poorest and most vulnerable population in the neighborhood (Covert, 2015).

While there are issues that set the context for violence, there are also formal definitions of violence. The World Health Organization's Violence Prevention Alliance (WHOVPA) (2017) defines violence as:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation. (WHOVPA, 2017, paragraph 2)

Jarrett, Bahar, McPherson, and Williams (2013) looked at how 13 low-income African American caregivers of preschoolers defined neighborhood characteristics that hindered their children playing outside. They found similar definitions of violence in the neighborhoods they studied compared to the WHOVPA definition. The participants described violence as: neighbors acting out, cursing and yelling in the streets, other kids fighting, gang bangers and drug dealers on the corners doing business or beating people up, people wandering around intoxicated, violent crimes, and shootings.

Similarly, Voisin, Bird, Hardesty, and Shi Shiu's qualitative study (2010) with 32 African American youth, ages 14 to 17 years old, living in high crime rates neighborhoods found that the participants described violence in their neighborhoods as including: physical attacks, gun violence and murders, fighting, and police incidences. The most common violent acts being gun violence, and the most unique being police incidences.

Factors that Contribute to Violence

Within the context of violence and factors that contribute to violence in communities, research identifies several factors that include gangs and the violence associated with them, and gun violence.

Gangs

In the context of the WHOVPA's definition of violence, gangs are considered to be a physical force of power, threatened or actual violence against people, groups, and communities, typically resulting in death, injury, or psychological harm; this is a form of explicit violence. The National Gang Center (2017) conducted the National Youth Gang Survey Analysis (NYGSA) of law enforcement agencies in the United States between 1996 and 2012 to assess gang problems such as presence, characteristics, and behaviors of local gangs. The NYGSA sample included more than 2,500 law enforcement agencies with a response rate of 85%. Respondents reported that the top three gang related criminal offenses were: aggravated assault (34.6%), firearm use (34.1%), and robbery (30.8%). They continue to discuss how gang membership increases one's likelihood to be involved in violent or criminal activities:

Gang membership is a strong predictor of individual violence in adolescence and generally has been observed to be an even more powerful predictor than two of the most highly regarded factors (i.e., delinquent peer association and prior violence). Survey research has consistently demonstrated that individuals are significantly more criminally active during periods of active gang membership—compared with before joining the gang and after leaving the gang—particularly in serious and violent offenses. Further, prolonged periods of gang involvement and/or greater embeddedness in the gang is associated with higher levels of criminal involvement (National Gang Center, 2017, section 6, paragraph 2).

Gun Violence

Another contributor to violence in the community is gun violence. In the context of the WHOVPA's definition of violence, gun violence is physical force or power, threatened or actual violence against people, groups, and communities, typically resulting in death, injury, or psychological harm, this is again a form of explicit violence. While there is no standard definition for gun violence, there are examples of what gun violence looks like. Every 24 hours, seven children and teens die from either being murdered with a gun or committing suicide via gun use; 40 children and teens are shot and survive, 32 through assault, one surviving suicide, and eight being shot unintentionally, of all ages. The Brady Campaign estimates that every 24 hours, "309 people in America are shot in murders, assaults, suicides and suicide attempts, unintentional shootings, and police intervention," (Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, 2016, section 2, paragraph 2).

According to Sackett (2016), it is no wonder that these income segregated neighborhoods have higher instances of violent crimes, such as gun violence. Poverty, segregation, and inequality are all precursors to certain neighborhoods being more susceptible to higher crime rates. Specifically, neighborhoods with a concentrated income inequality are likely to have a higher occurrence of violent crimes compared to neighborhoods, which are more economically well off. This is due to a number of factors such as these income segregated neighborhoods not having access to resources that may serve as means to solve problems, underpricing in these neighborhoods, and

troubled relationships with law enforcement. The lack of policing leaves the policing to gangs in the neighborhood) which leads to residents who witness crimes in their neighborhood being too afraid to testify, more residents joining gangs for protection, and an increased amount of disputes and crime among communities. Sackett (2016) also discusses the lack of collective efficacy due to a lack of trust between residents in these income segregated neighborhoods which, in turn, increases violence as well.

Speeding

While not typically thought of as violence, speeding can lead to disastrous consequences. In 2011, one county in Washington State reported that speeding accounted for 7,261 collisions (King County, 2017). The reason speeding increases the likelihood of collisions is because,

Speeding makes it harder for drivers to steer around curves, objects on the roads, stop quickly, or react to dangerous situations. High speeds also reduce the effectiveness of the vehicle structure, seat belts, airbags, guardrails, barriers, and other protective devices in crashes (section 2, paragraph 3).

Jarrett et al. (2013) agree that high instances of reckless driving and speeding occurring in their neighborhood leads to caregivers keeping their children inside.

Drugs, Abandoned Houses, and Dumpsites

In the context of segregated communities, other factors that correlate with violence include drug use, abandoned houses, and dumpsites. The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Incorporated (2017) states that drug use has a negative effect on a person's family, friends, their community, and American society in general. There is a connection between alcohol, drugs, and crime, resulting in about

80% of violent acts such as domestic violence, drunk or intoxicated driving, offenses to property, general drug offenses, and public disorder.

Similar to the consequences of drug use, abandoned houses set the context for segregated neighborhoods to experience more violence. Garvin, Branas, Keddem, Sellman, and Cannuscio (2013) interviewed 29 African American residents from low income neighborhoods with two vacant lots to explore the participants' perceptions of how those vacant lots influence health as well as their concerns about vacancy, health, and safety. This was a grounded-theory study that was concluded when no more themes could be identified in the semi-structured interviews; this resulted in 50 total interviews. Before probing, participants identified the abandoned homes and vacant lots as a poor maintenance issue in their neighborhood. After more specific probing, residents addressed ways in which these abandoned homes and vacant lots affected community wellbeing, physical health, and negative emotions and mental health. Community well-being was impacted by these vacant lots in that residents felt a lack of control over their neighborhood, tension was building between neighbors, crime and safety were of rising concern, and there was a negative impact on the economy of the neighborhood.

Ways Residents Navigate Through Violence

Considering all the factors discussed above and how they relate to violence in income segregated communities, it leads one to wonder how residents manage or cope with violence in income segregated neighborhoods. the literature categorizes

these copings into levels: micro, mezzo, and macro. The micro level addresses ways in which residents personally navigate their way through violence, the mezzo level encompasses ways in which the residents navigate their way through violence in ways that involve their surrounding community, and macro forms of residents navigating their way through violence at a political advocacy level.

Micro Level

Voisin et al. (2010) used a grounded theory design to examine the community violence exposure of African American adolescents living in a violence prone neighborhood as well as how they coped with that violence and if gender contributed to coping styles. The researchers came up with four types of coping that were identified by the youth they interviewed, listed in order of most reported to least: avoidance, acceptance, self defense, and confrontation. Avoidance, which was found in more females, was described as, “avoiding situations where violence might erupt, often by remaining isolated from other community members” (p. 2491). This meant that participants avoided places such as local parks, opted to stay inside all together, and overall avoided areas that violence was likely to occur such as crowded areas. Jarrett et al. (2013) agree that a form of coping with the violence was for parents and caregivers to keep their children inside.

Another coping strategy identified by Voisin et al. (2010) was acceptance. Acceptance, which was a coping strategy used by all participants, was described as, “getting through the violence by accepting the fact that the community is plagued

with crime, trying not to think about it, or using school as a way to cope or get out of the community” (p. 2490). In other words, acceptance was a realization of where they lived and accepting it for what it is, or using that as motivation to do well in school in order to be able to leave that neighborhood in the future. Self defense, which was reported by nearly all participants and more females than males, was described as, “becoming widely known in the community and associating with the ‘right persons,’ which often, but not always, meant associating with gang members who could offer protection” (p. 2491). Another coping mechanism was confrontation, which was the least used coping strategy only reported by males. Confrontation was described as, “active resistance, such as learning to fight or defend oneself and carrying a weapon” (p. 2492).

Mezzo Level

One way residents have navigated their way through violence in their neighborhoods is through joining gangs. Joining gangs is a way to build a reputation that may serve as protective factor when living in a violent neighborhood. Preston, Jane, Carr-Stewart, and Bruno (2012) discuss reasons why people join gangs such as it being a way of expediting children into adulthood, promoting gains in status and respect, increasing safety, providing protection, fostering a sense of community and family, and re-establishing cultural identity through gang culture. When these necessities are not being met for youth, they will generally seek them elsewhere, which is typically how gang involvement begins. One ironic point is that one of the

factors that lead youth to join gangs that was identified is the need for community/belonging; however, they end up being the cause of fear for communities. The authors continue to say that media outlets such as movies, music, and fashion portray gang involvement as luxurious. Gang members are shown with expensive cars, clothing, and jewelry. Some people join gangs because of this luxurious portrayal, people who have an entrepreneurial-like mind and want to make large sums of money quickly. While gang involvement is not actually as glamorous as it is shown to be, the idea of that lifestyle may be more appealing to residents in income segregated neighborhoods.

Another way in which residents navigate through violence at the mezzo level is through collective monitoring. Jarrett et al. (2013) described collective monitoring as a means of making sure neighborhood children can safely play outside. Parents and caregivers within the neighborhood identify certain members in the neighborhood and designate them as those who will help monitor their children while they play outside. Collective monitoring was shown to be more common in neighborhoods with long-standing residents, low density housing, and houses within close proximity with shared sidewalks and front-facing windows or porches. While this was a coping strategy found in the study by Jarrett et al. (2013), it may not be the case for all low-income neighborhoods due to the evidence shown by Parson et al. (2015) indicating that city amenities are disproportionately absent in low-income neighborhoods.

Furthermore, the literature has examined forms of residents navigating through violence on a mezzo level by directly and indirectly confronting violence. One study (Ohmer, Water, & Beck, 2010) examined residents' ways of confronting problematic behaviors and situations within their neighborhood. The purpose of this study was to find out through a pre-test what the natural style of confrontation of violence was for the residents, whether it be direct or indirect. Direct action was described as confronting another person while indirect action was described as calling the police or other officials. The pre-test showed that a majority of the residents would only use indirect forms of intervention when presented with problems in their neighborhood such as a neighbor playing too loud of music, or a couple having a raging fight in the street. After taking the pre-test, residents went through a, "training program which included six two-and-a-half hour weekly sessions, consisting of a combination of lectures, discussions, role plays and homework assignments," that taught about effective ways intervening within their neighborhood. The training included direct, indirect, or a mix of both types of interventions. After the training a post-test was administered; the results showed that residents were more likely to directly intervene or use a mixture of directly and indirectly intervening (Ohmer et al., 2010). The findings of this study imply that if trained, neighborhood residents will take a more proactive role in appropriately directly addressing violence if needed.

Similarly, van der Land and Doff (2010) did qualitative interviews with residents to explore their coping tactics within their deprived neighborhoods. One participant expressed his social control in his neighborhood directly. He described this direct intervention as intervening with his posture, which mostly then leads to violence during the confrontations. He states that this direct and physical intervention is a way of resisting the perceived downward spiral his neighborhood is seen to be in, it is his way of restoring order within the streets of his neighborhood (van der Land & Doff, 2010). This was a unique finding pertaining to this individual. While this resident addressed violence directly in an individual way, another participant also directly addressed violence directly, but to the community as a whole. This other unique finding was demonstrated by the resident putting together a community musical about slavery and invites youth to participate in it. She does this in hopes to bring the diverse community together.

Along with individuals navigating their way through violence, some research has gestured to how being a positive role model can help prevent violence as well. Hurd, Zimmerman, and Xue (2009) looked at protective factors of 659 African American ninth-grade students who were, “exposed to negative adult behaviors (p 1),” such as illegal, inappropriate, or destructive behaviors. They found that adolescents who had at least one positive role model, either a family member or school staff, had a better chance of resiliency and success in their schooling. These findings suggest that, while children who live in income segregated neighborhoods

have a higher chance of being exposed to the violence that occurs there, with positive role models, they may be able to experience more resiliency, thus avoiding violence.

Macro Level

Along with residents addressing violence at the micro and mezzo levels, they also engage in navigating through violence at the macro level. A story published in the Modesto Bee in December of 2016 told how a woman who was a resident of Sacramento, California was shot. Ariyana Jones was a 26 year old school teacher who, months before the shooting, went door to door in her neighborhood in attempts to start a neighborhood watch group to address a string of robberies that had been going on in her neighborhood. Police did not report whether or not the shooting was in response to Jones' attempts at addressing the robberies (Lindelof & Chavez, 2016). Stories like this may lead to residents being wary of engaging in political advocacy in violent neighborhoods.

Due to the potential dangers and consequences residents could face if they attempt to address violence directly, it may be beneficial to look at indirect ways of addressing it. Glaser, Yaeger, and Parker (2006) looked at Citizen Participation Organizations (CPO's) versus Neighborhood Based Organizations (NBO's), and determined what residents preferred. CPO's are described as:

Less concerned with grassroots involvement of citizens and are more concerned with the investment of public resources in ways consistent with the judgment of professionals. This approach depends on the judgment and the ethics of professionals to make the best use of public funds and to protect public interest. This form of citizen engagement is less likely to encourage coproduction of community improvement and is more likely to rely on the

government bureaucracy to answer the questions and concerns of citizens. (p. 179)

Whereas NBO's are described as:

Grassroots in nature, formed as parallel vehicles of citizen involvement. Those who are more concerned about grassroots democratic processes and principles and less concerned about government efficiency are more likely to favor NBOs. Those advocating citizen engagement through NBOs argue that increased costs associated with additional time devoted to decision making processes are more than offset by increased community commitment to the decision. (p. 182)

The authors also described a major difference between CPO's and NBO's:

NBO's come together and are formed when neighbors have shared values, concerns, and commitment to act. In sharp contrast, CPOs were formed when government deemed that citizen participation was necessary, and in more cases than not government decided what items warranted the attention of CPOs. (p. 188)

Residents were given a survey to examine their preference. The findings suggested that, overall, residents would prefer an NBO, and nearly two-thirds stated they would be willing to actively participate in the NBO to address neighborhood needs. Let it be known that participation in an NBO can be anonymous. "If citizens have been intimately involved in the design of a strategic agenda focused on the well-being of community, they are more likely to understand and support congruency between neighborhoods and community" (p. 209). However, more than one-third of residents stated that CPO's have more of an advantage of bringing communication between the neighborhood, the community at large, and the government (Glaser et al., 2006).

Beck, Ohmer, and Warner (2012) explain different ways communities can engage in collective efficacy in order to address neighborhood issues, namely violence. For the purpose of their paper, they define collective efficacy as, “in the area of community building, it is used to describe neighbors’ beliefs about their ability to effect change” (p. 228). Many of the ideas for collective efficacy that are explained in this paper are adapted from a restorative justice model in that they focus on neighbors working with one another, create ways to engage in informal social control, and they identify and spread prosocial norms. It is important to note that these forms of collective efficacy are facilitated by social workers, however the overall goal is to redistribute power from traditional holders to the residents themselves.

The first step to collective efficacy, as explained by Beck et al. (2012), is an informed social work practice. If community based social workers are taught about collective efficacy, then they will be better equipped to translate that information to the communities they work with. It is hoped that when social workers explain collective efficacy to the community members, the residents will see the benefits and have hope that they will be able to come together with their neighbors to address issues in their neighborhood. The second part of collective efficacy is using it as a, “complementary component to traditional community development activities,” (Beck et al., 2012, p. 233). The example that is used in their paper in a peacemaking circle, derived from indigenous communities, a peacemaking circle facilitates residents

coming together for various reason such as: conflict, introduction, celebration, commemoration, and community building. The overall agenda of peacemaking circles is to build relationships and break down barriers between residents. The third part of collective efficacy is the implementation of strategies that build collective efficacy. There are two processes within this part: informal social control and community conferencing. Beck et al. (2012) explain informal social control as situations where residents, “could be trained to intervene effectively, nonviolently, and directly as bystanders when confronted with instances of violence or community problems,” (p. 234). They then explain community conferencing:

Community conferencing is a restorative justice practice that seeks to facilitate constructive engagement for neighborhoods and organizations that have experienced conflict. Examples of neighborhood-based conflicts range from disagreements within or between community organizations, arguments among residents, and problematic behaviors. A community conference brings together a group of people— everyone affected by the situation, their respective supporters, and resource people—to address an issue. During the conference, the participants typically achieve a shared understanding about the causes and consequences of the conflict and then devise a plan of action. (p. 235)

Both informal social control and community conferencing were shown to benefit the communities in which they were implemented.

Addressing Violence in Segregated Neighborhoods

Along with residents identifying ways in which they currently navigate their way through violence, they also identify ways in which they would like violence to be addressed in their neighborhoods. These potential strategies are categorized within the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Micro level involves what residents can personally

do to address violence, mezzo level involves ways in which the residents can collaborate with the community to address violence, and macro level requires residents and the community to engage in political advocacy, community organizing, grassroots involvement, neighborhood improvements, and community based, multi-disciplinary coalitions to promote safety and evoke change in their neighborhoods.

Micro Level

At the micro level, there needs to be individual services that address individual trigger factors in residents that may lead to violent behaviors. These micro level strategies would go along with mezzo and macro level strategies as well. Voisin et al. (2010) stated that the implications of their study showed that, in order to address and prevent violent behaviors in residents, individual needs need to be addressed. The authors suggested that these individual factors that may lead to violence could be addressed through mental health initiatives.

Mezzo Level

Residents can play a role in addressing violence at a mezzo level by partnering with the community and community organizations and programs. Gomez, Baur, Hill, and Georgiey (2015) explain that park proximity, amount of greenery at a park, and the overall use of a neighborhood park promote a community's quality of life, social interaction of residents, opportunities for bonding between neighbors, general social health, and social cohesion. Their study found that residents must feel safe within their neighborhood for them to use the parks. Due to their findings,

Gomez et al. (2015) suggest that community organizations should have programs that involve community members helping with neighborhood park cleanup, in hopes that this would lead to a sense of community safety, social trust, and ownership for the residents.

Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley (2002) suggest that:

Although social ties are important, the willingness of residents to intervene on behalf of children may depend, in larger part, on conditions of mutual trust and shared expectations among residents. One is unlikely to intervene in a neighborhood context where the rules are unclear and people mistrust or fear one another. It is the linkage of mutual trust and the shared willingness to intervene for the public good. (p. 457)

In regard to strategies that address violence at the macro level, Voisin et al. (2010) also stated implications such as, “coordinated community initiatives may also be warranted. Such approaches seek to curtail gang activity, reduce the flow of guns to minors, improve the supervision of delinquent youth, and teach alternatives to violence.” They also thought that addressing the unique theme of police incidences could be addressed by, “increasing community-building activities between law enforcement and neighborhood residents in order to address community violence through a more nonviolent approach.”

In the context of addressing violence at the macro level, the implementation of out-of-school activities has been discussed as a way to address violence and promote safety in violence prone neighborhoods. Coulton and Irwin (2009) examined children who lived in low-income, minority, underserved neighborhoods who were in need of out-of-school community activities and their likelihood to participate in out of school

activities. Willingness to participate increased when parents were more involved in the neighborhood, if parents had previously volunteered in their community or had actively done something to improve the community, if the resident had lived in the neighborhood for a long time, and if parents were satisfied with the neighborhood schools. If a neighborhood was perceived as unsafe, this generally decreased a resident's willingness to participate in out-of-school activities; this finding was more true for the White population versus African American and Hispanic populations. The White population was also less likely than Hispanic or African American populations to participate in activities if they had a lower income. This study implies that community programs should reach out to culturally isolated children and families, and that adults should also be encouraged to participate in the community as this could raise the connectedness between residents and the community as well and increase a child's willingness to participate in out-of-school programs, thereby keeping them safe and involved with the community and their peers.

The results from a survey done to investigate the school-family partnership in low-income neighborhoods (Shultz, 2000) indicated that parents thought that schools and teachers could do a better job of initiating parent involvement, and the schools/teachers rated themselves as doing well in that area. Likewise, when it came to parent involvement, parents rated their involvement in their child's education as often, while the teachers rated the parents involvement as only sometimes. Fifty-eight percent of parents reported that the schools did not contact parents if their child did something

well or ask the parents to volunteer, 48% of the teachers agreed that they could do better. Both parents and teachers rated almost never or sometimes on, “talking to child’s teacher on phone, attending parent-teacher organization meetings, and volunteering at child's school or class” (p. 47). Overall, both parents and teachers rated that parent-involvement was quite important children’s success in school via more proactive parental involvement.

Similarly, Stone (1999) lists ways schools can help prevent children from joining gangs. It was found that early intervention and prevention are important aspects in schools with regard to student’s academic success. Some of these recommendations include: intervening in earliest signs of antisocial behavior, including alcohol/drug and violence prevention programs with regular curriculum, developing interventions to reduce truancy, increased discipline and give students clear and consistent anti-drugs/guns/gangs messages, provide after-school programs and extracurricular activities, and develop interventions to improve high school completion.

Literature has also reviewed ways in which gang violence could be addressed at the mezzo level. According to Howell’s (as cited in Spergel & Grossman, 1997) findings, gang suppression strategies indeed lead to increased arrests, improved prosecutions, and longer sentencing. However, these strategies did not lead to community control or a decrease in the gang problem. Despite these findings, gang suppression methods were still the primary approach used in communities.

Macro Level

Literature has explored ways in which violence can be addressed on a macro level. Some of the strategies include policy change, assessing for community needs, grassroots movements, school involvement, and social work community-based coalitions. These have been examined in the context of either recommendations or examples of how these strategies have been effective in the past.

In examining youth from violence-prone neighborhoods and what could be done to address on a macro level the violence they experienced, Voisin et al. (2010) suggested that policies be put in place to address gun violence by limiting adolescents' access to and use of guns by implementing an aggressive and progressive gun policy. Agreeing, the World Health Organization (2010) states that improved legislative measures for gun control can decrease the misuse and abuse of fire arms.

In addition to policy change, Jarrett et al. (2013) argue that urban planning should involve input from community residents, and take seriously their specific needs based on their accounts of what is currently working and what they say is needed. Needs expressed by community members in this study include: nearby public parks and play areas that are well-equipped and well-maintained, developmentally appropriate play equipment, multiple smaller play areas dispersed within the community to supplement the parks (residents stated that the multiple vacant lots within the neighborhood could be transformed into these smaller play areas), safer neighborhood schools, and enhanced lighting and public surveillance in children's

play areas. These strategies would increase community connectedness, thus providing less of an opportunity for violence to occur.

Another way violence could be addressed at a macro level is through grassroots movements. Glaser et al. (2006) found that residents' preference of how issues should be addressed in their neighborhoods was one of a grassroots type of movement rather than a fully government-run plan. More specifically, they requested somewhat of a mixture of the two, stating a governing body of:

Trained and committed professionals who have an intimate understanding of the concerns of neighborhoods as well as knowledge and authority related to the local government bureaucracy could be instrumental in producing convergence of purpose between local government and neighborhoods that is consistent with the broader community agenda. (p. 209)

Their discontent with a purely government-run administration related to residents needs not being accurately reflected in the actions taken by local government, a lack of communication between citizen and government, and potential self-interest of government undermining the needs of the residents.

There have been community organizing programs implemented to address gangs, specifically, however, some of them have been unsuccessful. Spergel and Grossman (1997) attribute this lack of success to, "fragmentation of program ad policy, lack of cooperation, and conflict among social and criminal justice agencies and local and national community organizations" (p. 457). They describe The Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project in Chicago that was used to address youth gang violence,

This approach is characterized by a team of community youth workers, probations officers, tactical police officers, and a community organization carrying out interrelated strategies involving social intervention, social opportunities provision, social control, and gang suppression within a framework of community activism. (Spergel & Grossman, 1997, p. 457)

The authors attribute the success of The Little Village Violence Reduction Project to the tight knit collaboration among community youth workers, some of whom were former gang members, police officers, probation officers, representatives from local organizations, and residents all of whom targeted the youth involved in hardcore gangs. The strategies this project utilized were community mobilization, opportunities provision such as job placement and trainings, social intervention such as outreach to youth on the streets or other problematic contexts, suppression, organizational change and development, and targeting. This project was implemented over a four year time span and targeted about 200 hardcore gang youths in the Little Village area of Chicago, Illinois. Group case management meetings were held about two to three times per year to assess the progress of the youth and treatment planning. Each unit had a separate weekly meeting within their own agency settings and reported back to administration. The empathetic and understanding relationships built among different agency workers, community members, and community youth workers seemed to be a huge part in the success of this project. The results indicated that participants' high school graduation or receiving of GED rose from 23.5% to 51.6%; employment rates of participants rose from 30.8% to 76.0%; compared to the control group, crime rates amongst youth decreased. The authors suggest that, through better integration across

organizational and community relationships, social workers can better address social issues. They go on to note that, “no single agency, community group, discipline, or approach alone is sufficient to successfully address a complex problem such as gang crime” (p. 469). This project was funded mostly by grants, which could explain why it is no longer active.

Aisenburg and Herrenkohl (2008) agree that a more integrative approach is needed to address violence and other risk factors. The authors specifically examined, thwarting children’s experiences of community violence. They suggest that:

Researchers engage residents of the communities they study as active participants in the efforts of knowledge building and transformation of communities and society. Inclusion of residents’ perceptions and insights regarding community violence and its effects and inclusion of their understanding of resilience are crucial to moving the field toward a more nuanced understanding of protective factors and risk factors and social processes. Such knowledge is needed to inform intervention programs capable of promoting positive development and outcomes for children adversely affected by violence in their communities, to promote resilience, and to prevent the perpetration of violence. (p. 310)

Nation, Wandersman, and Perkins (2002) further affirm that, due to the various problems that can exist in a community (economic, social, physical, and political), a multidisciplinary approach should be taken to address them. Due to the complexity of communities, they assert that a one-size-fits-all approach will not suffice to address every community’s issues. They recommend that, “the next generation of interventions for neighborhoods and communities emphasize four factors: comprehensiveness, empowerment, identification and utilization of assets, and sustainability” (p. 18). Comprehensiveness is described as implement

interventions that focus on the entire neighborhood's capacity to see and deal with problems versus single aspects of a community. Empowerment means placing just as much importance on residents' contributions to grassroots movements as outside professionals' contributions. Identification and utilization of assets is described as identifying current neighborhood strengths and utilizing those to help support the neighborhood. Lastly, sustainability means self-sustaining change and development by means of not relying on outside resources, not contaminating the ecosystem or running out of natural resources, and avoiding situations that promote leader burnout.

Dupper and Poertner (1997) discussed the fragmented system of care that typically had separate service systems with conflicting rules and regulations, which made it difficult for children in income segregated neighborhood to get a full range of services, in turn providing an environment that they are more likely to not succeed, therefore, potentially becoming involved in violent behaviors. Thus:

The essence of a family resource center is the pursuit of these common goals with shared resources through the collaboration of schools and human services agencies. The school provides a local organizational setting for providing access to high-risk families and children and has the potential of becoming a community hub and a welcome light. (p. 417)

They listed characteristics of these school-based resource centers as a single place where families and children can have access to all services such as health, mental health, job placement, child care and development, education, and housing. The authors also described how service providers would work in a holistic way to meet all needs of children and families. The resource centers would also be a place where

community development and family support is stressed in terms of prevention rather than being crisis driven and empowerment of service providers and community members is fueled through participation of planning efforts to meet community needs. In order to fund these resource centers, up to date funding streams would need to be created to support collaborative services on an continuous basis. Training would be administered to professionals working within the community. Lastly, “systemwide changes will be necessary to achieve these goals” (p. 417).

The school-based resource centers are based off the needs of the community. These needs can range from micro level to macro level interventions and resources, or anywhere in between. An effective example that Dupper and Poertner (1997) discussed was when the program was rolled out in a school in Bowling Green, Kentucky; this neighborhood was comprised of individuals mostly had low-income and were African American. What worked well in this example was the amount of parent involvement, which was made possible by program representatives who made house visits to the students and assessing their specific needs. Another successful tactic of this particular program was a program in which school staff took special interest in students whose parents were deceased or imprisoned, whose siblings were involved with drug dealing, or whose single parents was neglectful. The school staff would take their chosen students to go out to eat or to get haircuts. The success of this particular Kentucky program was clear, students had higher test scores, higher attendance, and more parents were involved with the school. This was just one

example of numerous successful school based resource centers discussed in Dupper and Poertner's 1997 paper. Previous research has stated that the more involvement the parent has and the more successful a child is in school, the less likely they are to get involved with violence behavior.

Dupper and Poertner (1997) listed challenges for these school based resources centers, these included "funding, inadequate space in the schools, the decision over who is to be served, confidentiality issues, and oppositions from community members" (p. 419). Aside from these, the most challenging task, yet the most critical and rewarding aspect of these programs, was to have parent involvement. It was noted as particularly difficult to get low-income, parents of color to get involved in these programs due to the stigma that they are merely clients who do not solve their own problems; however, these programs required them to be partners rather than clients. Another reason why parent involvement was difficult was due to the long-standing history of the school system failing minority communities in terms of being generally friendly and supportive. The bureaucratic school systems also sometimes had a difficult time sharing the tasks of decision making with the parents. Other issues with parent involvement included: lack of time and resources for the parents to even begin to be involved, and cultural and linguistic differences. This is a key role for social workers due to their, "considerable training and expertise in working with families" (p. 419). However, it is noted that the current lease of social work must change:

Professionals must shift from a child-centered, individualistic approach to a more family-centered and community-centered approach. Social workers have long operated from a deficit approach with families and must shift to an empowerment, family strengths model within this new service paradigm. (p. 420)

The authors note that social workers must also become culturally competent and sensitive to diversity. This can be accomplished through when social workers practice self-evaluation and honest assessments of their beliefs, as well as allow the parents in these communities to serve as teachers, partners, and collaborators.

In order to sustain these programs, the authors noted that two things must be done: social workers must show that the programs are working through process and outcome evaluations, and, “social workers must organize a constituency who demands that these programs are maintained in the community” (p. 421).

Summary

This review of the literature examined how past research has looked at how violence in income segregated neighborhoods has been defined and what factors may lead to violence, ways in which residents navigate their way through violence, and what residents have said needs to happen to promote safety in their neighborhoods on a micro, mezzo, and macro level. After examining the literature, it seems as though there is limited research on residents’ direct voices on how they define violence in their own neighborhoods. The definition of violence has typically been based on what professionals decide. However, in order to address neighborhood specific violence, a general definition of violence will not do justice. Upon further examination of the

research, there is also limited to no research on how these aspects of violence are defined and addressed in the California Central Valley, therefore the purpose of this research is to examine how California Central Valley residents in income segregated neighborhoods define violence, navigate through violence, and what they think needs to be done to address violence in their specific neighborhoods.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

There has been a vast amount of research that has shown how low-income neighborhoods are more susceptible to violence than the more well-off neighborhoods. However, there has been little research on strategies the residents of violence-prone, low-income neighborhoods used to navigate their way through the violent neighborhoods. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore residents' definition and understanding of violence, what they were doing and how violence was being managed. Furthermore, this study examined what needed to be done to address violence at the different sociological levels from the resident's point of view. Another important purpose of this study was to elicit responses from the residents that were their own rather than responses that had been shaped by societal expectations. The research questions that guided this study were: 1. How do residents of income segregated neighborhoods define violence? 2. How do residents navigate their way or cope with this violence in low-income neighborhoods? 3. What do residents in segregated, low-income neighborhoods think needs to happen to promote safety in their neighborhoods on a micro, mezzo, and macro scale?

Research Design

An exploratory research design was used to help better understand the issues of violence in low-income neighborhoods, what the residents were doing to navigate their way through it, and their recommendations on what needed to be done about it. Being that this was an understudied area of concern and little was known about it, an exploratory design made it possible for the issues to be examined, in-depth, through the views of the residents (Faulkner & Faulkner, 2014).

This was a qualitative research study. Faulkner and Faulkner (2014) explained that a qualitative research design aims to see how people interact with their environment. The main focus of this study was to get a better understanding of the issues directly through the lived experiences of the residents. An exploratory, qualitative research design allowed for this exploration. Some of the strengths of qualitative research, as it pertains to this study were: the incredible amount of depth and understanding that can come out of the research, the flexibility of the research (i.e. going at the researcher's pace, the residents' pace, and being able to engage in research, whenever an opportunity arises, with little preparation), this type of research can also be fairly inexpensive (Crossman, 2014).

Further, this study used the grounded theory design to explore the research questions as well as to consider any new information or issues that was identified by the residents. Grounded theory uses a specific type of questioning and analysis to get information on primary problems or issues identified by the population (Faulkner &

Faulkner, 2014). First, open-ended questions are asked, then the data are analyzed, and based on the answers given, more specific questions are asked as follow-up. This process is described as speculative inquiry, which is when common themes are derived from the information collected from the interviews (Faulkner & Faulkner, 2014).

Data were collected through focus groups with residents in violence prone, income segregated neighborhoods or one-on-one, face-to-face interviews. Both the focus groups and interviews were semi-structured in that specific, open-ended questions were asked in the initial interviews, but then, based on the themes derived from those responses, different and sometimes unplanned questions were asked in subsequent interviews (Rubin & Babbie, 2005). Focus groups are defined as a group of like-people coming together to discuss their opinions or experiences of a certain topic. Some reasons for why focus groups were ideal for this study include the ability to get a number of voices heard in a smaller amount of time, the possibility of hearing diverse opinions of similar experiences, and the potential for the participants to be able to be motivated by each other to engage in the group. Also, focus groups are more natural in nature and more consistent with how people engage in discussions in their real life (Gibbs, 1997).

One-on-one interviews are described as interactions between the researcher(s) and the participants with a general topic in mind (Rubin & Babbie, 2005). While focus groups were ideal, individual interviews had advantages for this study as well.

For example, one-on-one interviews allowed for rapport building between the researcher and the participant that had the potential to lead to rich discussion of the topic and questions. For both focus groups and individual interviews, any questions were clarified and elaborated on, and participant responses were verified to assure that accurate data was being collected.

Sampling Plan

This study used non-probability sampling to recruit the target sample. One sampling technique that was used was purposive sampling, in which the participants who were selected for inclusion in the sample had specific knowledge and characteristics (Faulkner & Faulkner, 2014). The goal sample size was between 7-10 residents, and the required age of participation was 18 years or older. The participants needed to meet certain criteria in order to be eligible to participate in the study, including living in and having knowledge of a low-income, high crime neighborhoods. This researcher attempted to identify local agencies within low-income, violence-prone neighborhoods, obtain permission from the agencies to conduct the research within the agency building, and then interview within these agencies the residents who self-identify as having the above characteristics and were willing to participate. However, all participants in this study ended up being recruited through non-probability, snowball sampling.

Snowball sampling was also used to recruit participants for the study. This is when the researcher networks out to people or one person who meet(s) the criteria in

order for those people to spread the word to people they may know who fit the specific criteria of the research sample in hopes that they join the sample (Rajamanickam, 2001). This may be done by word of mouth with peers or participants, and social media. Snowball sampling is extensively used when trying to access a hard to reach population. Potential participants were given the researcher's contact information (phone number and email) in order to reach out and set up the focus group or individual interview.

Instrumentation

This researcher collected qualitative data for this study. The questions that drove the interviews were based on participants' knowledge and experiences with living in low-income, violence-prone neighborhoods. After coding the first set of responses, the researcher had another round of interviews with more specific questions deduced from themes drawn from the previous responses. The subsequent rounds of interviewing were done with the same participants as the first round. This process was repeated until the researcher decided that no new information was being produced by the participants (Rubin & Babbie, 2005). Due to the exploratory nature of this study, questions were not adapted from prior research. The set of questions that were used in the first round of interviews are attached in Appendix A.

These questions helped describe any existing phenomenon, what actions were being taken in response to this phenomenon, and the consequences of those actions. The answers to these questions lead to a working hypothesis that have been

continuously be shaped into a working theory at the end of a study (Rubin & Babbie, 2005).

Data Collection

The data in this study were collected by this researcher. The interviews were conducted at common areas in the community for the protection of the participant and the researcher. Participants choose to have interviews held at a location of their choice. For safety and confidentiality reasons, this researcher opted to not conduct interviews within the home of the participants, only in public settings as noted above. Rubin and Babbie (2005) stated that due to the in-depth nature of qualitative interviews, it is best to record the interviews verbatim to capture the responses. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the participant.

The semi-structured, focus groups were audio recorded. Prior to recording the sessions, the researcher obtained permission from the participants to do so in the informed consent. By audio recording the sessions, the researcher was able to fully focus on the participants during the interviews and focus groups, additionally, the researcher noted anything that stood out (Rubin & Babbie, 2005); the participants were be able to reference the notes to verify that the notes taken were accurate.

Data were collected approximately end of October, 2016 through February, 2017. The focus groups lasted up to two hours and were held two times per group. The individual interviews lasted up to two hours and were held two times per individual. The individual interviews lasted one to two hours and were held two times

per participant (initial interview and follow-up). If needed, any participants were able to request for additional time or interviews. Any participant who was unable to do the initial focus group was able to participate in the follow-up focus group. Likewise, any participant who was unable to attend the follow-up focus group was able to have an individual interview instead.

Plan for Data Analysis

The researcher audio recorded the interviews and took notes if needed. The researcher transcribed the audio recordings into narrative form to begin the data analysis process. The framework that was used to create themes from the data was Neuman and Kreuger's (2003) five step plan for qualitative data analysis. The five parts included: sorting and classifying, open coding, axial coding, selective coding, and interpreting and elaborating. The first step was sorting and classifying, whereby the data were organized around the research questions. Second was open coding, which was the process of the researcher identifying themes and then assigning initial codes or labels in an attempt to condense the data into categories. The third step was axial coding, where the initial codes created during open coding were examined, revised, divided, or combined, as needed. The fourth step was selective coding, during which the researcher identified direct quotes and narratives to support the themes identified in the previous steps. The final step was interpreting and elaborating where the major themes derived from the data were related to the existing literature.

This was the time when the researcher compared and contrasted the themes, concepts were organized, and working theories or explanations were formulated.

Protection of Human Subjects

The researcher provided every participant with a written informed consent that explained the purpose of the research study and the participants' rights. The informed consent was provided in English and a verbal explanation of the informed consent was provided to each participant. All participants were advised that their participation in this study was strictly voluntary and they could refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at anytime without penalty. Participants were informed about the approximate duration of each interview, which was estimated to be from one to two hours in length. The interview took place at a location of the participant's and researcher's choice. In the event that any participant expressed discomfort or stress as a result of their participation in this study, the researcher provided the Stanislaus County Emergency Support phone number (209) 558-4600, the Stanislaus County Suicide Prevention and Crisis Services phone number 1-800-273-TALK or 1-800-SUICIDE, the Stanislaus County Program Information phone number 1-888-376-6246, and the San Joaquin County Crisis Clinic 24 hour phone number (209) 468-8686.

The researcher also informed the participants that the information they provide would be protected from all inappropriate disclosure under the law. Their names and identities were not linked to the answers they provided for the interview or

focus group questions. The participants were informed that all tapes recorded for this study would be erased and all notes would be shredded in March 2018 and that the collected information would be kept locked in a file cabinet at all times. The participants were informed that all research study findings would be presented in aggregate form to protect identifying information on any participant.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study examined how residents of low-income, segregated neighborhoods define safety and violence within their neighborhood, what they are currently doing to navigate their way through that violence, and what they think needs to be done to address the violence at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Three research questions were addressed in this thesis: 1) How do residents in income segregated neighborhoods define violence, 2) How do residents navigate their way or cope with this violence in low-income neighborhoods, and 3) What do residents in segregated, low-income neighborhoods think needs to happen to promote safety in their neighborhoods on a micro, mezzo, and macro scale? This was an exploratory, qualitative study that utilized a grounded theory design in order to explore the research questions as well as to consider any new information or issues that may have been identified by the residents. Data were collected through focus groups or individual interviews with current residents who self identified as living in low income, segregated neighborhoods. Seven participants were interviewed for the first round of interviews, and six participants were interviewed for the second round, totaling 13 interviews. All participants resided in Modesto, California. Two participants were male and five were female. Other specific demographics were not

collected from the participants as their collective voice of their experiences was the focus of this study.

Definition of Violence in Segregated Neighborhoods

The first research question explored participants' understanding and experiences of violence and safety, in the context of the neighborhoods in which they live. Two major themes emerged in response to the questions asked regarding violence and safety. The first theme addressed explicit acts or behaviors that were defined as violence such as gang violence, gun violence, and speeding. The second theme related to factors, the absence of which, led to violence or the fear that violence would be triggered. These factors included city amenities, actions of major corporations such as Gallo, and dumpsites. Gangs, gun violence, city amenities, and speeding were an evident source of violence in each neighborhood, whereas actions of Gallo and dumpsites were centralized to a single neighborhood. Minor probing efforts were needed for these themes to be identified by the residents.

Explicit Violence

In response to the first research question focusing on what violence means and how it is experienced, there were two overarching themes identified by the participants with several sub themes within those. The first major theme was explicit violence, which included actions or behaviors that demonstrated violence such as shootings, stabbings, intimidation, and fighting. The above forms of explicit violence

were largely tied to gangs in the neighborhood. Other forms of explicit violence included gun violence and speeding.

Gangs. The first sub-theme of explicit violence is gangs, which was identified by all seven participants. All participants described gang violence as including shootings, stabbings, fights, and intimidation. The participants' responses are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant's Quotes on Gangs

Participant 1	Within the last few months there's been two killings, one was right down the road and it was a friend of my boyfriend's, a very close friend. There are always shootings here. Not too long ago there was a gang fight right in the road.
Participant 2	About three months ago, a guy that was still involved with the gangs got shot like 10 times and was left right there on the street. After they shot him 10 times they stabbed him three more times and threw him out of the car.
Participant 3	If you piss them off then basically they are going to go to your house or mess with you or your family, then they are going to want to fight you. They just don't care, and it's because they don't know anything else, that's what they were raised around, that's how they were brought up. It's specific groups, most of the people who are affiliated with gangs or drugs or they just don't care.
Participant 4	There is too much gang activity for people to get involved in people's business. Your enemy lives right alongside of you sometimes. You gotta just look away.

- Participant 5 Gang shootings, there's murders, there's all kinds of illegal activity.
- Participant 6 There's some shootings that go one, then everybody just disperses back into the house. Then there's some crazy people where the gangsters live, they drive up and down the street a good 70-80 miles per hour.
- Participant 7 There was once, not in my neighborhood, but a couple of streets away, there was a wedding and they were outside celebrating and there was a drive-by, and I guy was shot. And down the street a little bit, it's just a gang ridden street, and there's police and shooting there's several times a week.
-

The proximity at which the gang members live was also a concern within the context of the violence experienced. Five of the participants identified two or three gang houses on their streets or the streets next to theirs. One participant stated, "there are like three houses at the end of my block are all gang related people." A second participant added, "they have certain houses they kick back at,". A fourth participant explained, "there's a gang one street over and they run the whole road. I don't go down that road but I have a lot of people tell me not to go down that road." Not all participants explicitly talked about avoiding the gang houses in the neighborhood, however, they did speak of avoidant actions such as not walking outside alone and not getting involved in violence , which will be discussed later in the chapter. Lastly, a fifth participant said:

There is a lot of shootings [one block over], and it's probably because those guys are red and they are still there, but they aren't on this street. If you are red you are fine but if you are blue around here then you aren't.

The red and blue are the colors of competing gangs; one gang wears red and the other wears blue:

Participants described gang members in their neighborhoods as mostly youth, and some adults. A participant explained that most of the gang members in their neighborhood are, “just young thugs.” Another participant described the gang members as, “mostly just the young people and the older people who think they still run things.” Another participant, who has a history with gang involvement stated, “they don't bother nobody, they are just a group of kids, adults too.” Another participant remarked on residents in her neighborhood, “if there are younger people they are usually gang related.” One participant commented on police involvement as not effective when it comes to dealing with gang issues, “police will come pulling up with their lights on and the gangs will run them out and police will leave and not come back.”

Gun violence. With respect to explicit violence, participants talked about how gun shots and the fear associated with them was a source of violence; thus, the second sub-theme of explicit violence was gun-violence. Participants talked about their experiences with gun violence that was not directly related to gangs. This gun violence was described as hearing gun shots in their neighborhoods or witnessing gun violence which invoked a sense of fear within the participants. One participant said, “there was a guy speeding up and down the street and someone approached him to tell him to stop speeding and he shot the person.” Another person told of their experience:

When I woke up I heard four gun shots, and it was so close that I heard a lady crying, these other women were screaming, and the men were arguing, then I heard a bunch of cars take off. I don't know what was going on, I don't know if there were gang affiliations, but I just know that it was disturbing to actually hear that one woman crying.

Another participant stated, “I’m not constantly afraid, but when I do hear a gun shot I just start thinking ‘okay how close was that, do I need to get on the floor’.” One participant explained the frequency of experiencing gun violence, “every night and every day I hear gunshots.” Lastly, another participant detailed their experience, “I have a bullet hole through my window from the house behind me on New Years. That was about 45 minutes of non-stop bullets.” The participant continued to explain that what shootings occur, they lay on the floor until the shots stop.

Speeding. In regards to explicit violence, the third sub-theme that emerged was speeding and how it related to violence. One participant described speeding in their neighborhood, “we got high speed chases all the time and we got people out there speeding just for fun.” Another participant talked of what happened to a resident when confronting an individual about them speeding in the neighborhood, “there was a guy speeding up and down the street and someone approached him to tell him to stop speeding and he shot the person.” Another participant explained the extent to which people speed in their neighborhood, “then there’s some crazy people where the gangsters live, they drive up and down the street a good 70-80 miles per hour.” One participant talked about speeding being considered a violent behavior due to the schools and presence of children in the area, “there’s a school near by and I wonder if we can get some speed bumps to try to slow them down.” Across participants, speeding was thought as being dangerous to the children who play or walk in the

neighborhood. The lack of speed bumps and other safety necessities will be discussed in more detail below.

Factors that Lead to a Lack of Safety

In response to the first research question, the second major theme that emerged related to factors that lead to a lack of safety, which were perceived as then contributing to violence. There were several neighborhood characteristic and conditions that, while they were not described as direct forms of violence, decreased safety in the neighborhoods. The participants also shared how the absence of specific safety features in the neighborhood led to or produced fear of violence. All seven participants identified this lack of safety as including: an absence of or insufficient city amenities such as speed bumps, street lights, and sidewalks, the presence of a homeless population (the physical disorder of their encampments and their behaviors), empty lots in the neighborhoods, abandoned houses, and drugs.

City amenities. The first sub-theme within factors that lead to a lack of safety was the absence of specific amenities. The participants considered this as contributing to the feelings of safety due to their absence leading to increases in/triggering violence. Five out of seven participants viewed the absence of or insufficient city amenities such as sidewalks, street lights, and speed bumps as contributing to lack of safety in their neighborhoods. Four out of seven participants resided in one particular neighborhood; all of them shared their experiences in Table 2.

Table 2

Participant's Quotes on City Amenities

Participant 1	It's more like a big dumb site. There's a lot of empty lots that used to be houses, but they were burned down from squatters or something. Now the houses are torn down and a lot of people in the neighborhood dump garbage, and there people camping in those empty spots. I don't know it's like a very poor neighborhood.
Participant 2	I just don't like how people trash and vandalize everything and just like, I don't like how they don't appreciate their neighborhood.
Participant 3	You'll see all the trash and trailers, and people live there. Like I get it, people need a place to live, but it's like you don't have to live like that and make it all ugly.
Participant 4	I remember I was younger I had to walk when I was in middle school I had to walk down the worst of the streets one night, and I was afraid because there were two guys and they just picked up a bottle and smashed it, and I just remember being that young and walking, it was pitch dark, and there's no street lights on that street, at that time there was maybe like one on each end of the block, so you had to walk through, there are no sidewalks or anything.

As previously stated, the absence of or insufficient city amenities allows more opportunities for violent behaviors such as possible victimization, gang violence, other physical violence, child endangerment, and speeding. One participant explained that the neighborhood had made efforts to get street lights, however, they were placed in the alley ways and have been shot out, "I know they petitioned for street lights, but

they put them in the alley, I don't know why they did that for. We got a street lamp but it's always getting shot out or something.”

Gallo furthers segregation. Another major theme, with regard to the understanding and experiences of violence, related to the role a major corporation in the area played. Three of the seven participants made accusations about Gallo, and while these accusations cannot be proven or disproven by this study, they are important and deserve mention. There are beliefs that Gallo is responsible for the burning down of homes in order to expand in this particular neighborhood, as the neighborhood becomes less desirable to live in. The participants also noted that this is a contributor to the empty lots, which then turn into dumpsites in the neighborhood. One resident stated, “Gallo eventually wants to buy out my entire neighborhood, they pay people to go burn down houses out there that people move out of so that they stay unoccupied.” Another participant added, “we suspected [that Gallo was burning houses down], because it's weird how its just over there and then they burn down and then Gallo purchased it.” Another participant discussed his suspicions of Gallo being involved in burning down homes in the neighborhood:

For a long time on that side there were a lot of fires going on and those are the houses that Gallo ended up buying. Yeah now it's an empty lot with a nice fence and a turn-in parking lot. And it's not happening further into the neighborhood, but Santa Cruz Rd. and all the houses along Santa Cruz Rd. in the back by the park. Oh yeah, they made parking lots. It's crazy because everybody in the neighborhood is talking about that, ‘oh, Gallo paid somebody to burn them down,’ I believe that, I believe that.

By negating one side of the community, Gallo is further segregating Airport, thereby contributing to an environment that is more susceptible to violence, and displacing violence from one side of the community to the Airport side. One participant told a story of when they moved into the neighborhood many years ago and Gallo played a positive role in the neighborhood:

For a long time when I was growing up I took much pride in living in Airport because Gallo was there, you could walk through and see them making the bottles, and Gallo was always clean for the most part, more than it is now and Gallo took pride in the neighborhood too. I remember once when I was about 11 or 12 one of the guys from Gallo came to our house and bought us Christmas gifts, and that's what they did back then. Now, the kind of just pushed us this way and took what they wanted and are all to themselves because they are getting bigger and better. They weren't always that way, but now they are kind of overtaking our neighborhood.

The residents have hopes that Gallo could start being more active in helping provide more amenities in their side of the neighborhood, which will be addressed in later in the chapter.

Dumpsites. In exploring factors that contribute to a lack of safety, a third sub-theme that was identified by four participants was dumpsites. The dumpsites were thought to be a factor contributing to a lack of safety in the neighborhoods as well as being a health issue. This sub-theme is separate from a lack of city amenities due to this being a unique theme for one specific neighborhood, while lack of city amenities was a general theme for all neighborhoods. Most residents commented on the dumpsites becoming encampments for homeless people as well as a source of rat infestation:

There's a dump site that a lot of the neighbors in the neighborhood are complaining about, that was not there about two or three years ago, but it's where some houses burnt down, now homeless people have encamped there with their trailers, vacant cars, they have made homes out of paper and plastic.

In the context of safety, one participant talked about her experience when attempting to take pictures of the dumpsites to send to the city to be dealt with when she was attacked by a young homeless individual:

Take the dumpsite away from here, because not only has it attracted violence and homeless people, but I been assaulted when I was out there to take pictures. I was assaulted by a younger girl, and my granddaughter was with me at the time.

How Residents Navigate Through Violence

The second research question explored how residents are currently dealing with the above issues, or things they have done to deal with the violence and lack of safety. When asked how the participants navigate their way or cope with the violence, all seven participants described ways in which they do this on an individual and family level (micro), within their community and with other residents (mezzo), and on a political level (macro). The micro, mezzo, and macro scales are the overarching themes that emerged with regard to how residents cope with or navigate their way through violence; several sub-themes emerged within these and will be discussed in more depth.

Micro Level

All seven participants explained ways in which they dealt with violence in their neighborhood in individual, familial, or household ways. This seemed to be the

most prevalent way participants were dealing with the violence. These strategies involved personal choices that were described as: vigilance in order to be prepared for when violence occurs, minding their own business as not to get involved in potential neighborhood violence, using their experiences in the neighborhood as a guide of how to live differently and in a non-violent way (resiliency), teaching their children or grandchildren how to not be violent or avoid violence as a means to break the cycle of violence (positive role model), and building a reputation for oneself.

Vigilance. The first sub-theme identified by all seven participants was vigilance and how they use it as a way to better prepare themselves for or prevent potential violence in their neighborhoods. This was described as a sense of heightened caution and awareness due to not knowing what people are capable of, whether that be violent behaviors or unhealthy influences such as gangs or drugs. This overall caution and awareness that they embody is due to their experiences with the types of violence they listed in the above section for research question one. Participants shared how they demonstrate their caution and awareness as well as what may lead to the development of the caution and awareness. The direct quotes illustrating this theme are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Participant's Quotes on Vigilance

Participant 1	Being assertive, a lot of time we keep our doors locked, we don't leave our car running outside because even in the best of neighborhoods they take cars, I don't let my kids, especially the girls, walk outside. If I send the kids to the store it will be my oldest grandson or my boyfriend, so even though I was raised here all my life I still have to take precautions.
Participant 2	Being in my neighborhood for about 20 years you just pick up on certain things I guess. I think that if you don't grow up in the neighborhoods I grew up in you tend to be a little more weary, as for me walking down the street late at night isn't necessarily an issue because I know the things I have to watch out for you know I never walk with headphones on, I never take more than a few steps without looking back and making sure I'm aware of everyone that's around me. Safety to me would be expecting the unexpected, being prepared, don't fool yourself about where you live, be aware of your surroundings, conscious people do, just keep you ears open.
Participant 3	I wouldn't let my kids walk to that school. We don't let them go out, they don't go out and mess around. There's a bunch of stuff going on in the neighborhood. Now I don't trust a lot of the people there. For myself I trust them, but I just don't trust them with my kids; just a lot of influences around there.

- Participant 4 You have to be careful what you do and what you say, who you say it to. You just have to be very careful in everything that you do. I'm scared to walk to the store by myself because you don't know what's going to happen. I don't go out at night, I don't walk around at all, I literally never walk around by myself or ever. Always keep our doors locked, keep everything locked, keep the kids inside the gate. It's just because you don't know what's going to happen. People do stupid stuff out of nowhere, so you just always have to be careful. I don't think I've ever felt safe, that's why I would never go by myself. And my parents didn't let us go by ourselves either, like we would have to go with one of our nephews or like my sister or dad would have to go with me. I know to just go home and not go outside, don't walk anywhere because if you do that's how you meet people and you meet the wrong people.
- Participant 5 As long as you have your radar up and you know what is going on around you, I feel fine. I guess I just have a radar on all the time. Like when family comes over to visit, the kids will play in the front, they are used to it there, but I feel more comfortable sitting in the back yard.
- Participant 6 Keep to yourself, there's your safety, leave people alone. I don't walk around at night, I keep things locked up. I don't go outside my gate, if it's dark I don't sit in the front.
- Participant 7 I mean I wouldn't say it's violent at night, I guess it's just a little uneasy. You don't know what's gonna happen. You know it's creepy, you don't go outside at night, you don't trust your neighbors. I mean you don't know who does what.

Minding their own business. The second sub-theme that was identified by six participants was minding their own business as a way to avoid or prevent violence. One participant described their neighbors as mostly keeping to themselves as to avoid possible violence, "it is relatively quiet, people tend to keep to themselves

for the most part.” Another participant commented on her neighbors having a friendly demeanor, yet still not communicating with one another, “you know what’s interesting is I keep to myself. In fact, most of them [neighbors] speak Spanish, but they are very friendly and they wave but there’s not a lot of [verbal] communication. I think everyone keeps to themselves, out of sight out of mind.” One participant explained that they do not want communication with neighbors, “I mean everyone keeps to themselves, I don’t like neighbors that bother me. If you talk to people that is how problems start. Just keep to yourself.”

The participants also talked about how they themselves followed the same behaviors as their neighbors in terms of minding their business in order to avoid or prevent violence. Their experiences and quotes are captured in Table 4.

Table 4

Participant’s Quotes on Minding Their Own Business

Participant 1	You just gotta look away.
Participant 2	You can’t say anything, because like, that’s their (whose?) business. I will never say anything. It’s like we have to keep our mouth shut in order to protect ourselves. My dad won’t do anything because he just doesn’t like that, he tells us to mind our own business.
Participant 3	I’m more of a private person now that I dropped out of the gang so I just stick to myself or my family.

- Participant 4 I think a common belief on that is it's somebody else's business and when you intervene on that you're affecting somebody else's life. So it's kind of seen as butt out or keep out of it because it's not your problem. So that's what personally keeps me from interfering because I don't know what I am getting myself into.
- Participant 5 My parents are very much kept to themselves, so in my house we never really let outsiders in too much, and so my parents being so reserved made me reserved and so I felt like I kept to myself a lot more than some of my other friends did.
-

Resiliency. Another way that participants shared coping with violence or lack of safety was through resiliency. Thus, the third sub-theme that three participants identified was resiliency and the role it played in their ability to cope with the violence in their neighborhood. This sub-theme was described as participants taking their experiences of living in violent neighborhoods and using that as an example of how not to live. One participant explained how they were able to be resilient, even when growing up among violence:

You can come from a house full of drugs, but it's what is inside of you and what you make of life. So the people that care want better for themselves, they want to live better from where they came from, not to say that I came from a drug addicted family, because I didn't, but I saw my parents strive and try to get the best out of life and that's what was imbedded in me and that's what I try to do. I make the best of where I'm at. I'm a survivor. I make it work for me, I don't let the violence, crime, or drugs affect where I live.

Participants who spoke of resiliency made the connection of either growing up with support systems or currently having support systems in place such as family, and how these factors contributed to their resiliency with living in a violent neighborhood. A

second participant described how her bringing-up contributed to her ability to be resilient and not give in to the violence in her neighborhood:

Luckily for me my parents raised me a certain way or they were a certain way and influenced me in a way that I was lucky that none of the things I was involved in affected me in the long term.

A third participant talked about how they used other peoples lives as an example of how to not live, and how that ruled their resiliency:

When I first lived there I just saw how everybody was. I went to school with a lot of the kids that lived there and each year there would be like less and less kids that would go to school with me because they would all drop out or have babies, and get into gangs, do drugs, sell drugs. I think how it's impacted my life is to just not want to end up how they did. And the decision that I made was to just watch them and make sure I don't go down that same path.

Positive role model. The fourth sub-theme which two participants discussed was being a positive role model. This was described as how they teach resiliency by being supportive and providing a good example of how to live a non-violent life in a violent environment. One participant discussed how she acts as a positive role model for her grandchildren by showing them that, while they live in a violent neighborhood, they can still be positive members of society:

Well I have my grandkids that I have custody of, even though we live within all this chaos, I try to teach them the best of what they can be. So even though I live here amongst all this ugliness there's also beauty within it, and I tell them, "even though we are here and you see this, you don't have to be like that." I teach them better, I'm a better role model for them. I get up, I go to work every day, I keep my house clean, every weekend we all have different chores.

Another participant spoke of how she acts as a positive role model to her neighborhood by doing random acts of kindness such as bringing food to neighbors, and being sure to interact with neighbors by waving or saying hello:

I know that I am a positive role model on that block, being interactive with them and being aware of them, seeing them and acknowledging them, and being a positive influence in that neighborhood. I'll go to the store and get some ice cream and I'll get them some and share. To me it's really important, especially knowing they are an African American family and even though they are with other minorities [Hispanics], minorities aren't necessarily nice to each other either. So just being that positive person, like hey we don't all have to be mean to each other, like hey yeah your family is different from everybody else on the block, but they can still be nice. So on an individual level, being aware of the people who are around you and making that extra effort to be nice. I have a bunch of books that I was thinking of taking over to them, you know just little things like that I think are easy in these communities. It's easy to make a big batch of tamales and go to your neighbor and give them a bunch. you know sharing is already a big thing in that community, you share whatever little you have. A common expression is, "where 2 eat 3 can eat, where 3 eat 4 can eat." So on an individual level just extending that to other aspects in our life not just food but whatever resources we have.

Building a reputation. Three out of seven participants commented on how building a reputation for oneself can serve as a protective factor against violence. This was described as either being involved in a gang, or interacting with community members in a violent way to show that they will not tolerate violence against them. One male participant told of how his past gang involvement is now a source of protection against gang violence for him and his family, "they don't bother us, well, they don't bother me." Other participants explained other ways, besides gang involvement, they make a reputation for themselves; why they feel they need to build a reputation (see Table 5).

Table 5

Participant's Quotes on Building a Reputation

Participant 1	A lot of people know me there and I've been in so much confrontation that they just know who I am and I ain't gotta do nothing no more. People know who I am connected with and who I associate myself with, so I don't even have to say nothing they just see me and they know.
Participant 2	If we get a new gun and are in a new neighborhood we will let a couple of rounds off in the back yard so the whole neighborhood knows we got a gun. People do that, every holiday we are out there dumpin' so people remember we do still have our gun.
Participant 3	Some neighborhoods you go to if you act a certain way or carry yourself in a certain way, say you are too nice or too kind, they will look at it as a weakness and you will be eaten alive even by the weakest dude and they will start picking on you until they push you out of the hood. So you kinda gotta hold back parts of yourself and build this wall so people know you're dead serious, like you ain't gonna repeat yourself, you know when you are being disrespected so you just instantly handle it.

Another participant talked about their experience with having a father who had built a reputation for himself and how that has served as a source of protection for the entire family, "I feel like more people would try to mess with us. But just because they know like who my dad is and that we are his daughters they don't really try to do anything, so that's nice."

Mezzo Level

All seven participants discussed ways they cope or navigate through violence at a mezzo level. The sub-themes included creating a sense of community with other residents within their neighborhood, involving law enforcement, reluctance to involve law enforcement, and making a reputation for themselves by being part of a gang or being a source of violence in the neighborhood. These are all forms of coping and navigating through violence that required resident's interaction with other individuals or an entity outside of their home, such as other community members and law enforcement.

Sense of community. While residents stated that minding their business was a way to avoid or prevent violence, six out of seven participants described how building relationships with neighbors was utilized as a protective factor against violence and a way to maintain or promote safety. Some of the traits of these relationships were explained as: helping with keeping the immediate neighborhood clean (i.e. cleaning up trash). One participant talked about how she and a few neighbors work together to maintain upkeep of the neighborhood as a means to build a sense of community:

I try to maintain it, the people across the street try to maintain it, this street I consider that the nicest part of airport because we all work together and try to keep it clean. If I go outside and see that the neighbor has trash out there I'll pick it up, I don't question it, and he does the same for me.

Another way participants built a sense of community was watching out for one another in order to promote and maintain safety:

Everyone on our little block looks out for each other. We could be gone all day or two days and our neighbors the left and the right and across the street would look out for our house. And we do the same for them, you know we

look out for their houses too. We feel comfortable, even though the people who live behind us who camp out in the tents they watch our house too, they don't steal... Well I'm sure they steal, but they don't steal from us because they don't want to get in trouble and lose their spot.

Another participant explained that, due to her parents' sense of community with the neighbors, folks are more willing to help them when they are in need:

If you need something they help you out. We lost our dog and it was really important to me dad, so he told everyone around the neighborhood, and everybody helped us look for it and spread the word. Because everybody knows my dad, they know who he is. That's the good thing, if you lose something, they will help you get it back. Eventually we found the dog because of our neighbor. And one time somebody stole my dad's bike from the liquor store and my dad knows a lot of people so they helped him get it back. So that's a positive thing, people help you out, because we were raised around them for so long and it's like a family, they are there when you need them.

This sense of community served as a source of safety for participants:

What I do like about it is once you do make friends you kinda do build a community, you know like when someone throws a party it doesn't matter how long it has been since you've seen them, they are going to invite you. My neighbor became pretty much my second family, and I would literally walk from my house to theirs for parties or whatever. So once you do make those friendships and associate with people you just become kinda close.

Another way that having a sense of community promotes safety is by looking out for each other. Two participants talked about how they know some of their neighbors look out for them. One participant noted their experience:

There's been times when I'll like drop my glasses and somebody will come to my door and be like 'hey are these your glasses?' What I like about it is like if someone were to go look in my car or something, somebody saw it, and if they are friends, they will let you know, one way or another, it might be a phone call or a text, or they might just come knock on your door and specifically say 'so and so who lives down the street just looked in your car, you might want to move it'. So it does become a tight knit community where

you know the people who you are avoiding or the people you know will watch out, and more than likely if something happens, someone on the block saw it, and if they are your friends then you are going to hear about it.

A second participant added:

We have a unity here, she watches my house, he watches my house, I have no fear of anybody breaking in my house, and my brother lives in the back. So I don't have any break ins. Now I know on that side over there, there was a couple of break ins but those people were new to the neighborhood, so they were kinda vulnerable because they didn't know people. I know people here, I grew up here, and they know me so it's kinda like they aren't going to break into someone's house they know and they won't break in with him [the neighbor] next door.

Lastly, one participant noted her first experience of community safety, when a neighbor whom she did not know offered a helping hand in a time of need:

I ended up going into the hospital for my surgery and the week that I came home the same kid came to my door with the cookie dough that I bought and the mom was out in the car and said that they came by multiple times the week before and I told her that I had been in the hospital, and she asked if there was anything she could do for me, if she could go shopping for me, and I didn't know this lady, and it blew me away, there are good people.

Overall, a sense of community gave the participants feelings of comfort and safety within their neighborhoods.

Reluctance to involve law enforcement. Four participants explained what fuels their reluctance to involve law enforcement. Two of these participants were male and expressed reluctance in contacting police due to not wanting to be viewed by other community members as snitches. One participant noted this experience,

We can't talk to the cops, if people see you talk to the cops, they will look you up and see if you snitched. I ain't a snitch. So if anyone sees me talking to the cops they think I'm going to jail.

One of the male participants did state that he supports his family's decision to call police, however, he would not be present when the police arrived. He stated:

I try to stay anonymous. If I had to call I would stay anonymous. For my families safety and for my safety I probably would [call]. My wife wouldn't hesitate to call, but I wouldn't, I still feel uncomfortable. (Have you experienced the police coming to respond to any of your wife's calls while you were home? What was that like for you?) Oh yeah, I go out the back door and through the alley. I don't want to participate, I'm just uncomfortable.

Another participant assumed that other residents in her neighborhood refrained from calling police possibly due to their immigration status or a language barrier. The participant explained:

People don't want to get involved, they wouldn't want to have to talk to the cops once they got there. My neighbor is much younger and she would probably call the cops, but the older people on our block would definitely hesitate because they don't necessarily want to get involved when the police come. And a lot of them don't really even speak English to be able to relay whatever they saw. I think because a lot of them at some point were illegal immigrants, I don't know if that contributes to the overall feeling in the neighborhood about cops. My neighborhood is predominantly Hispanic, so I don't know if it's just an authority figure coming through, knowing what is going to happen when they get there, even though I'm sure that's not the case for my neighbor specifically. I think a lot of those feelings just come back on you and they don't really want to talk to the cops.

Another participant noted that some reservations about calling police stem from police making it known who called, therefore, putting them in a risky position with the people who they called the police on. The continued to elaborate on this experience:

One time my parents had to call for a neighbor and my dad told them not to come to the house though because we don't want them to see who called, and the first thing they did was come to the house, and it's like we just called the cops on violent neighbors and you guys come to our house first, you put us in

a really awkward position because somebody saw, somebody is going to know they came to our house first, and what's next you are going to go over there and tell them we called? So you don't want that retaliation. I know one time they would tag our fence, and my dad said if we called the police then the people would probably come back and tag it even more.

Response time of police varied from quick to no response, this did not seem to promote or hinder all but one participant's decision in calling the police:

I had to call the police [about a bothersome neighbor] but they told me that because he wasn't in my house that it doesn't matter. They don't do anything, they are unnecessary. They won't come anytime soon, not in my neighborhood. I got one cop that covers Salida all the way to my neighborhood, so unless you are dying they are not coming.

Involving law enforcement. Three participants identified they would be willing to involve police or other officials such as the fire department or city board members when faced with violence. One participant noted that involving law enforcement was a way to avoid directly addressing violence, "you don't get involved with it, you see it, you call the cops, you do what's right." Another participant detailed their experience with involving law enforcement:

Sometimes I will call the fire department. I take the necessary precautions that I need to. I think because of being in the neighborhood and because of the violence they are pretty prompt about it [responding], and they make sure that everyone is okay, they want to see everyone in the house, they want to come in you can let them in or you don't have to, or they ask you to come outside.

Another participant explained different instances in which she had to contact the police, "I had to call the cops a couple years ago because there was a man intoxicated laying in front of neighbor's house." While this participant was willing to involve law enforcement, she stated she has had bad experiences with calling police, these will be

discussed in the following section about what fuels the reluctance to involve law enforcement.

Macro Level

The last major theme around ways participants navigated their way or cope with violence was identified as political advocacy, which was shared by three participants. Specifically, two participants stated they have been, are, or are interested in being involved in political advocacy to address violence or a lack of safety in their neighborhoods. One other participant explained that, while they are not comfortable engaging in political advocacy, they support family members who are. One participant commented on political advocacy she is currently engaging in to address city amenities. The participant shared:

Right now me and [four other neighbors] are in the process of collaboration of how to get a petition started or figure out how to go in front of the board to take the dumpsite away from here. I have pictures of the encampment because those are pictures that I want to present to the board so that they could do something because we all feel like they [the board] don't care, because they think, "oh they live in the airport district they don't care, they live in a shabby house, they don't care they are drug addicts," but like I said in the beginning, we are not all that way. So we are in the process of getting together and trying to put our minds together, how are we going to present this, how are we going to write it up, what are we going to say, what proof are we going to give them with that presentations. I'm kind of the voice for me neighbors because most of them are Spanish speaking, because they [the board] don't speak Spanish, but my neighbors from this corner to this corner are all willing to confront the board. My next step would probably be to contact the airport stations, they have a group that's called Airport United or something to that effect, that's something that I could do. I also wanted to touch bases with the school and see if there is something they can help us with. And I know Love Modesto... this is something that is all in process, but I have to get my ducks in a row as see if I can just get a collaboration of people to help to get rid of this. I've called the county to see who owns these places but of course that is

confidential information even though I have looked it up myself and I know who the owners are but I don't have their phone numbers or anything to contact them. I've had them send letter to these addresses to clean up and they kinda like put all the junk in a big pile, now there is grass growing over it. I don't know why the county cleans up that side [Gallo side] but they won't do anything over here. They keep telling me it's going to take time, but it has already been two years. I emailed someone on Fox40 News but they never contacted me back.

The other participant talked of their experience living in a new neighborhood, noticing issues with people speeding through the neighborhood and being interested in engaging in political advocacy to resolve the issue:

Then there are some crazy people where the gangsters live, they drive up and down the street a good 70-80 miles per hour. And when I start feeling better that's something I can address, because there's a school near by and I wonder if we can get some speed bumps to try to slow them down. and wanting to address the issue through political advocacy.

The participant continued to tell of concerns that the other community members may be unaware of how to engage in political advocacy to resolve issues of violence in the neighborhood:

I don't think the people in my neighborhood have that wherewithal to go down and pursue that. And so when I start feeling better I want to go down and see if there's something I can do to address that.

Lastly, another community member explained why they do not engage in political advocacy:

I think for me what has kept me from addressing it is growing up in the neighborhood and knowing everybody there. That and maybe being involved in the gang at one time and not participating in it any long might keep me from taking any action. I just don't want to act like I'm policing anybody.

Promoting Safety on a Micro, Mezzo, and Macro Scale

The last research question explored ways in which residents wanted the violence or lack of safety in their neighborhoods to be addressed; specifically, what actions should be taken on a micro, mezzo, and macro level and who would be responsible for executing those actions. The actions that residents identified were: micro level actions taken on an individual level; mezzo level actions which included teacher involvement, community groups/organizations, law enforcement relationship, and community clean-up; and macro level action which included the city, major corporations, school programs, community organization, changing bias, and political advocacy. The micro, mezzo, and macro levels are the overarching themes that emerged with regard to what the residents recommended needs to happen to promote safety and address violence in their neighborhoods; several sub-themes emerged within these and will be discussed in more depth.

Micro Level

With regards to what residents think should be done to address violence and the lack of safety in their neighborhoods at the micro level, two participants stated there is both a personal responsibility and a community responsibility to promote safety within their neighborhoods. Compared to the mezzo and macro levels, the micro level had the lowest number of participant responses. This limited response to actions on a micro level was more than likely attributed to the general sense of fear that resident's felt when talking about taking action themselves.

Personal responsibility. The first sub-theme that was identified by two participants was personal responsibility towards addressing violence or lack of safety in their neighborhood. One participant described this responsibility as being nice and kind to their neighbors. The participant explained:

I guess those individuals like myself who are more aware of just how slippery of a slope things can be I guess just when you go through and you see someone be courteous, even though these are sometimes people you don't even want to approach. Being kind, really.

This participant believes that the better you treat your neighbors, the more likely they will be to be kind in return, thus potentially stopping violent or aggressive attitudes before they begin. Another participant described this personal responsibility as keeping their own peace, they continued:

I think each person has their own responsibility to keep their own peace and to keep themselves contained. If people just worry about themselves and take of what they need to take care of then they wouldn't be out there selling, or being so angry or hateful.

This participant believed that by actively not getting involved in potentially situations or with potentially violent people, then they will avoid becoming engaged with violence in overall.

They went on to explain what personal characteristics have kept him from joining in a gang:

My intelligence. I had my creativity, I always had something else that I wanted to do besides be in a gang, I wanted to draw, wright music, sculpting, surf, I always had a hobby, that's why I do tattoos. (So if you could speak for your friends that are in the gangs, what could be done to help them?) I would say get a hobby, I think everybody in the world has a talent that they are better than everybody at, like nobody could beat you at this one thing, you just gotta find out what it is.

Individual role in community building. Two participants described a second sub-theme of individual's role in community building as a means to promote safety in their neighborhoods. This was described as building relationships as well as having a presence within the community. The first participant explained the benefits of being involved in the community:

I feel like people need to get involved in their community all together and once they do that, start meeting their neighbors, you know. (So do you think being more involved and connected in their communities would address gang violence?) Yeah it could because then like word of mouth would start spreading, communication, then a lot of things would get solved, people would find out that they don't need violence to solve their problems.

The second participant added to the benefits of community members making a presence in the neighborhood, "when the neighbors go outside with all their family and celebrations, that says a lot, it sends a message to the gang houses that we are strong." While there are benefits to the community making a presence and coming together, this participant stated that community members may feel too intimidated to come together in fear of possible retaliation from gangs:

If the neighborhood would come together, but they are too intimidated to do it, but once you form an alliance and tell that group 'hey we aren't going to deal with this' then you just made yourself a target. I don't even know if I would want to do that in my neighborhood and set myself up.

Mezzo Level

All of the participants agreed that safety in their neighborhoods should be addressed on a mezzo level. More specifically, participants identified ways in which existing organizations and groups in the community such as schools, community

cleanliness, groups providing opportunities, and law enforcement could play a role and have an effect on neighborhood violence. Participants also elaborated on barriers that may hinder teachers from being more involved with the students and neighborhood and playing a more active role in promoting safety in the neighborhood.

Schools. With regard to promoting safety at a mezzo level, participants discussed the first sub-theme as schools within the neighborhood. Six participants commented on the role schools play in promoting safety: through community connectedness, school programs (such as after school programs, programs for older youth, and gang-prevention programs), early intervention, and training centers for jobs skills and advocacy. Participants emphasized the importance of schools because they saw schools as a potential meeting place for residents as well as having such a huge influence in steering the lives of youth in the neighborhood.

In the context of the role schools play in promoting community connectedness, three participants identified schools as having the ability to be a common meeting place for parents and caregivers as a means to bridge the gap between themselves, the school, and their children's education as well as be a common meeting place for residents in general. The first participant explained:

It would definitely be a matter of getting like some kind of school system involved or like having some kind of resource for the parents to go to and like actually have an understanding of what is going on and seeing a reality of what is going on because I think the parents on our block they think 'as long as my kid is going to school who cares.'

Another participant stated that the schools could serve as a meeting place for community members to gather and discuss neighborhood safety or other issues, “I don't know if the school holds meetings still, but maybe they could start participating.” They also explained that a potential way schools could promote safety would be to have awareness programs, “Maybe ex-gang members can start some kind of program and take it to the schools, like gang awareness and all the no-no’s about it.” The last participant continued to share what role schools play in community connectedness:

Provide more teacher interaction with students and parents before and after school to help provide model appropriate ways to interact with one another when dealing with conflict. Schools can provide a safe environment to provide parenting classes and classes to help students with school work, as well as homework.

With regard to school programs, five participants discussed how implementation of or improvements to school programs could contribute to promoting safety in the neighborhood. These programs included: after school programs, programs for older youth, and gang-prevention programs. This participant continued to talk about the role after school programs played in their life and how it is important for youth to be given the opportunity to attend these programs:

I know that growing up we had after school programs. I was part of one of those after school programs and for me it was just a place to be, somewhere where I could be safe. I did have to walk home in the dark in the evening, but at least during the day I had something to do, somewhere to be, somewhere to do my homework, so it kept me out of doing other things that could have affected my life differently.

A second participant added that while there are some school programs in their neighborhood, they do not serve all ages of youth. This prevents all children from being in a supportive environment in which they are able to work on homework and build relationships and connectedness with other neighborhood youth. This participant also stated that they believe school are, “the core of the neighborhood,” yet, “don't do anything,” in regard to promoting safety. The third participant identified ways in which school programs could address gangs specifically:

In order to prevent gangs we could educate the importance of an education earning money vs. the risks of making money in a gang. Provide more before and after school activities to help teach kids what to do with spare time, conflict resolution, and anything that helps promote self worth. Provide tutoring incorporating some of the kids with academic skills to be tutors which may support the idea that we are basically all the same, it's what we do with our choices given to us. Teach to be more accepting of one another. Provide skills such as how to search for a job and how to interview well for a job. Have someone who use to be in a gang and has same background education the same population on how they got out and the benefits of doing so.

Another participant stated that, while there are programs at the school, they are not effective, “I think that they need to have some sort of after school program for the kids to go, because D.A.R.E and stuff doesn't really do anything.” They continued to talk about accessible activities for children after school would be a protective factor:

If they had places for kids to go after school, I think that would be a huge deterrent to give them something to do, or maybe just help with homework, and making it affordable to everybody can take part in it.

Two other participants talked of how schools could implement gang-awareness programs. This would not only educate youth about gangs, but also serve as a way ex-

gang members could participate and possibly re-integrate into society in a positive way. One participant said, “maybe ex-gang members can start some kind of program and take it to the schools, like gang awareness and all the no-no’s about it.” The other participant continued, “create awareness, show outcomes of gangs or what your life could be. The school could probably get people together who have experienced it.”

In the context of promoting safety, one participant identified schools’ and teachers’ efforts to intervene in youth’s lives could be a way to avoid problematic and violent behavior from beginning or getting worse. At this point in time, the participant identified where the schools are lacking in intervention, but recommended that if this were to improve, it could serve as a protective factor in the community. They continued to say that, along with this lack of intervention in problematic behavior, the schools may also rush to kick these students out of school, which then groups them together at a stigmatized continuation school. Due to this participant’s personal experience, they suggested that the schools provide more support, counseling, and advising to students:

I think that if schools were to help encourage them, have advising. Because at my school [college] they have EOP and it really helps, every month they have an appointment and they keep an eye on you, and they encourage you to want to do better. Whereas if you aren't meeting with someone every month it's a drag. So I think that school play a major role because I think that's where the mind is developing and that's where people are growing up, so that's where they need it the most.

The same participant stated other ways that the school could promote safety in the neighborhood, such as awareness and programs:

I think that it could be improved by just giving more attention to their students, and creating after school programs like if the kids need help. Or creating groups. I don't know if they have something like that, but that would be helpful. Create awareness, show outcomes of gangs or what your life could be. The school could probably get people together who have experienced it.

With regard to promoting safety at a mezzo level, two participants talked about how schools can serve as a training center for subjects such as jobs skills and advocacy. When asked what would have helped a certain participant not engage in violence, he discussed the importance of job skills training in schools and how that can contribute to safety in the neighborhood by increasing their student's chance of being employed out of school. They stated:

Easier access to things that would have helped me move on in life, like better job placement, so there ain't so many of us that get out of school and are like 'I don't know what I'm gonna do with my life'. A lot of the gangs, if they were at work there wouldn't be violence because they would be busy working or spending money.

When discussing schools serving as community advocates one participant explained that residents might not be aware of how to properly advocate for themselves and their needs. They suggested that schools could host advocacy classes for older residents who want to advocate for their neighborhoods:

It's the younger [residents] that know how to write, but us older ones don't have a clue unless we get online and google it and you can try to find it. Some of them [grants] are easy, but some of them are kind of difficult and if you don't know how to read what they are trying to say.

Two participants further discussed the role schools play in advocacy, both by teaching advocacy skills as well as being an advocate for the neighborhood. One participant

stated the schools have the responsibility to push neighborhood issues to the awareness of the city. Another participant highlighted that the schools could serve as teaching places for not only youth, but all community members to learn advocacy skills:

[What do you think about teaching grant weighting in schools?] Yes, and that's really funny because it's the younger ones that know how to write, but us older ones don't have a clue unless we get online and google it and you can try to find it. Some of them are easy, but some of them are kind of difficult and if you don't know how to read what they are trying to say.

Community cleanliness. In regards to promoting safety at the mezzo level, the second sub-theme that participants identified was community clean-up and pride. Three participants talked about community cleanliness being a factor that could promote safety. One participant explained that if the neighborhood was clean, the residents would realize they are more than just their circumstances, “just clean up the streets, make it look better and people will probably act better. People start seeing how dirty they are when they live in a clean place.” Another participant talked about the cleanliness of the neighborhood as a source of pride for the residents, “if we could even change their environment I think that people would feel that much better about themselves and who they are, not feeling so stuck.”

Police. In the context of promoting safety at a mezzo level, the fourth sub-theme identified was police. Two participants discussed the impact police have on promoting safety and ways in which that could be implemented. One participant stated he believed more police should patrol the neighborhood; however, after some

discussion the participant recanted his thought and stated that increased police patrolling may cause more issues in the neighborhood. Instead, he suggested that increased patrolling would need to be a slow and gradual act in promoting safety in the neighborhood.

The discussion shifted from more police patrolling, to police having more positive interactions with community members. The same participant talked about police playing basketball with youth at the park, however it seems as though that is not something that is a priority, “they [police] do go there [the park] and sit at the park, but there’s only like 2 or 3 kids.” Another participant explained that the power dynamic that is created by the interactions of police officers may be a source of violence, thus improving those interactions could promote safety:

I think if the police knew how to interact better with people, not just coming on to them in a bad way, but more like ‘hey, how’s it going’ in a nice manner that they would have more respect for the police officers and not try to retaliate against them. Maybe then people wouldn’t get into gangs to try to make themselves feel more powerful.

Barriers to teachers promoting safety. In the context of actions that need to be done to promote safety, residents identified barriers to teachers promoting safety as a fifth sub-theme. Three participants explained that teachers have a responsibility to help bring up youth who would be resilient enough to overcome living in a violence prone neighborhood. Barriers to teachers promoting safety were identified. These barriers included where the teachers lived, the effort that teachers put into the children, homework, communication with parents, and teacher biases of students.

With regard to barriers to teachers promoting safety, the first participant talked about how the amount of effort and understanding on the part of a teacher influences how effective they will be in helping the child avoid becoming involved in violence:

I think they cared more before and now it's like they don't really care. For example when my grandkids went there they would say the teachers don't care. Teachers have changed too, and because they changed the neighborhood has changed also. A lot of the teachers don't know the surroundings like the teachers back in the day. They took more pride in it, teachers probably aren't even from around here. I know one of the principals that's not there anymore was from Lathrop, she's not there now but she's at a school in Mountain View. What's the recommendation?

This participant continued to say that the efforts teachers make with the children is an important aspect of bringing up resilient youth:

When my daughter went there she would bring home a big page of homework, and every week there was something different and there was a lot of interaction. She is much older now, but now I see that gradually through the years it has been declining... like maybe a half a sheet of paper or no homework at all, or leave it up to the parents to teach the kids, but the teachers. So a lot of the education piece has changed too. So the answer to that is the teachers don't make much of an effort as they did before.

The same participant suggested that teachers have a responsibility to help raise money for the needs of the neighborhood:

Maybe funds, they don't apply for grants. Like I said the teachers have to initiate all that, and maybe just by them going there to start class and finish class is enough for them and what happens afterwards is not a concern of theirs.

A second participant stated that some teachers have biases towards students from these neighborhoods and assume they will not succeed:

I just feel like some schools or teachers just want to outcast them or get them out as soon as they can, and that's what causes them to want to sell drugs, to be in more gangs, to want to do stupid stuff because they feel like they have

nothing else. I don't think the school play any role in encouraging kids to do better, because they are just under the impression that they are going to do whatever they want anyways.

This participant continued to say that, instead of having these biases, teachers should use the environment that the youth live in as an incentive to put more effort into them:

I think the kids would feel important if the teachers and faculty made them feel important, if they made them want to do better. I think the counselors and the teachers need to put more emphasis on the students. Especially areas like Airport, they need to just put more time into their students.

Opportunities. A more unique sub-theme mentioned by one participant was that groups and organizations could hold job fairs, stating that this would prevent youth residents from joining gangs and selling drugs. While the participant made this general recommendation, they did not have any particular organization in mind. They stated:

I honestly think it would really help if people got together with the people from Airport and tried to help them see what a better life they could have, like not having to be in gangs. I think holding events or job fairs in the Airport, just to get them participating in something else rather than staying home and having nothing to do so they go out and sell drugs or do stupid stuff with their friends then causing them to get in trouble. Even when they don't want to they still do it.

Macro Level

All of the participants agreed that safety in their neighborhoods should be addressed on a macro level. All participants think that political advocacy, the city, major corporations, schools, and the stigma associated with children living in low-income neighborhoods all have an effect on promoting safety for the community overall. However, before being able to address recommendations to how safety

should be promoted in their neighborhoods, residents discussed barriers to political advocacy.

Barriers to political advocacy. The most common theme in the context of macro level practice and how it can contribute to promoting safety was political advocacy. However, while participants described political advocacy as a way to address violence, the more pressing issues were the barriers to personally get involved with political advocacy. Thus, five participants identified barriers to political advocacy. Within barriers to political advocacy, several sub-themes were identified such as lack of time and fear.

Lack of time. In the context of barriers to political advocacy, a unique sub-theme was the resident non having enough time to engage in political advocacy. This participant stated they wanted to reach out to assembly members; however they were unsure if their busy schedule would allow the time, “all this takes time and it’s a lot of work.” They continued to talk about barriers to safety that would discourage them from participating in political advocacy:

I do know the neighbors around me and some of them are the problem. So in order to address it they would have to know that it was me and I don't want them to have any ill feelings or whatever.

Another discouragement to community advocacy was past attempts of advocacy and their outcomes, “it took years of complaining for them [the city] to finally put sidewalks and they only did it down one street. So the rest of the area is without sidewalk.”

Fear. With regard to barriers to participating in political advocacy, a sub-theme that emerged was resident's fear of repercussions or consequences of engaging in political advocacy. The participant stated that while many of their neighbors want to promote safety in the neighborhood, they would not feel comfortable doing it themselves because it may negatively effect people they know in the neighborhood:

I know that maybe just the people around our neighborhood on the side of us and across the street from us would sign it [a petition], but not everybody in the neighborhood would sign it. A lot of the people who live in my neighborhood have family members that live in 'the bush'. (So a petition is usually something you would take door to door, is that something you would feel safe doing?) I would feel safe doing it. He [husband] wouldn't just because he knows a lot of people that are living on the streets.

Another participant also described safety barriers that prevent them from wanting to engage in community advocacy:

I guess just the danger that you could get yourself into for even intervening in something. I think a common belief on that is it's somebody else's business and when you intervene on that you're affecting somebody else's life. So it's kinda seen as butt out or keep out of it because it's not your problem. So that's what personally keeps me from interfering because I don't know what I am getting myself into.

They, too, explained a history of not having the needs of their community met in a timely manner, "I know we didn't have street lights on that block for a long time and it took years of complaining and saying, 'hey our kids are walking home alone on those streets, they don't have sidewalks'." Just as the first participant, this resident also believes that the neighborhood residents are responsible for continuously advocating for their needs to the city and that people should not be afraid to do it:

I think it's up to us to constantly pester the city and make those demands and feel free to make those demands because a lot of the time people don't leave their neighborhoods that much and they don't get to see the nicer sides of the city, and if they do they just see it as a luxury that they can't have or they assume that the sidewalks are the way they are because it's the nice side of town and the city is taking care of them. So i think letting people know it's okay to make those demands and if they see a need... my mom always tells me a closed mouth doesn't get fed, so just making people aware that it doesn't have to be that way and the city has just as much of a responsibility to take care of our neighborhoods just as much as any other.

Another participant stated that while they agree that advocacy is a way to promote safety, they would not be comfortable doing it. Some concerns that affect this decision are the history and ties they have with the neighborhood such as previous gang involvement. Another concern that affected the decision to not engage in political advocacy was having family member who are homeless in the community that may be displaced due to the results of the advocacy. The participant explained:

I think for me what has kept me from addressing it is growing up in the neighborhood and knowing everybody there. That and maybe being involved in the gang at one time and not participating in it any long might keep me from taking any action. I just don't want to act like I'm policing anybody. (So a petition is usually something you would take door to door, is that something you would feel safe doing?) I wouldn't. No, I know a lot of people that live in those camps, my brother is one of them, what would happen if he got the boot? Where would he go to next?

Two other participants agreed that safety barriers keep them from participating in advocacy, more specifically retaliation from dangerous residents. One stated, "I think that some of the barriers is just like not knowing what their reaction is going to be, like not knowing what retaliation they would take against what you have to say." The other continued, "some barriers from me taking action against the violence is

setting myself up as a future target, making myself noticed. This participant also described confusion about how to advocate as well as lacking faith that anything would come of the advocacy:

But how would you even do that? Do you just make enough calls and say ‘hey these people are selling drugs’? I would be afraid taking pictures of them, because if they saw you then you would be in trouble. Its a deterrent for people getting involved and trying to change things. It also makes me made because these thugs can get in there and run the show because they intimidate people. It’s like a catch 22, you have to let them do their thing because you are afraid. Look at the guy that did try to deal with it, he got shot and killed. Then if you do contact people that are in power to make decisions, do they even want to put the money out to help these neighborhoods? Or do they just say ‘oh well’? Maybe they have that preconceived notion that they don't care, this is how these people choose to live this is where they choose to live and let them live that way.

Community organizations and programs: barriers and recommendations.

With regard to promoting safety at a macro level, participants identified the second sub-theme as community organizations and the active role they play in promoting safety in the neighborhoods. All participants stated that community organizations such as community centers, programs, organizations, clubs, and missions play a role in promoting safety in their neighborhoods. These were explained in a context of either barriers to action such as community centers being in place but not being used for their intended uses; programs being in place in the community, but the environment being either too unsafe or inappropriate for the programs to be useful; and current programs only being for children rather than older youth, or recommendations such as potential uses for community centers, programs geared towards parents, programs for the homeless population, and sources of much needed

funding. It was also explained that these organizations could have an impact on youth, parents, and the homeless.

Barriers. In the context of barriers to community organizations promoting safety in the neighborhood, participants expressed concerns regarding community centers being in place but not being used for their intended uses; programs being in place in the community, but the environment being either too unsafe or inappropriate for the programs to be useful; and current programs only being for children rather than older youth.

When discussing barriers involved with community centers not being used effectively, two participants expressed their concerns. One participant explained that there is a community center in their neighborhood, however, it is not being utilized appropriately due to the surrounding environment:

They do have the Martin Luther King Center in my neighborhood but I rarely see anyone out there, it's right next to the park that a lot of druggies are at so I never really see anything good going on there.

The participants talked about these centers being a possible recreation area for neighborhood youth to gather and be able to engage in appropriate activities rather than run the streets and possibly get into trouble.

With regard to barriers involving the environment being too unsafe or inappropriate for existing youth programs to effectively work, two participants explained their experiences. One participant shared:

South Side, they got the Red Shield, like a little community hall for kids to go to, maybe if we had something like that for kids to go to. Because POWELL

comes but they go and sit at the park and there's a lot of gang activity over there. And they are out in the open. Probably about 10 years ago there was a drive by shooting at that park where POWELL was and a girl got killed.

Likewise, this participant talked about the environment that the youth are exposed to when attending the neighborhood programs:

They have a Boys and Girls Club, and literally they take them out to play and there will be like junkies sitting out on benches. You know to me it's like these kids are not safe let's get them back inside right now. For them that's a daily thing, they don't even flinch.

Another participant talked about the environment that the youth are exposed when attending the neighborhood programs:

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Lastly, when discussing barriers, one participant stated that the programs in their area are only for children of a certain age. However, they did explain that these programs are crucial in preventing youth from joining gangs, selling drugs, or participating in any other inappropriate activities:

There's a group that's called [couldn't remember] its an organization that works with underprivileged children but they have to be under the age of 13, and those people come and take kids from around here and they will take them canoeing in the summer time. There is also the Powell that come over here to this park and they do a lot of things with kids after school that don't go to the after school program at Orville Wright School. Powell is there to keep kids out of trouble too, and reach out to the kids in this neighborhood so they don't end up in gangs or violence, or kids that are in broken homes have somewhere safe to go if their mom is sleeping all day because she stayed up so many days before. So they have those kinds of organizations and groups for the kids.

Recommendations. In the same respect that participants identified barriers that hindered the effects of potentially useful community organizations and programs, they also discussed recommendations they had for community programs and organizations. These recommendations included potential uses for community centers, programs geared towards parents, programs for the homeless population, and sources of much needed funding. These recommendations were expressed as ways to address violence in the neighborhood by way of providing places for youth to thrive, to help the homeless population being more self sufficient instead of giving limited resources, and to provide ways in which funding can be attained for the neighborhood.

When discussing recommendations for existing community centers in the neighborhood, three participants explained their ideas and concerns. One participant stated their recommendations of having community centers being opened up to children of all ages as well as being used more often for youth in general:

I don't even know if the community center is for older kids, I don't even know if it's being utilized for that so they should open that up for them as well, not just for the younger kids. Everybody says the kids are our future, so I think they could do more. Make more programs. I know they have a community center that they don't even use, and they built it but it's not being used. Why did they build it if they aren't going to use it.

Another participant said that the lack of activities for youth may lead to gangs involvement, so addressing this could promote safety, "there's nothing for the kids in Modesto to do after school, so they go out and they look for something to do and that sometimes leads to trouble." Another participant stated that turning abandoned

buildings into recreation centers could promote safety, “in our neighborhood there’s a lot of unused buildings on the corners that could be turned into a recreation room for the youth, have someone direct that.”

Continuing the conversation and stressing the importance of community centers that serve youth, one participant discussed their experience with living in a place that had youth programs, versus living in a place without them and what effect that has on a child’s life:

When I was growing up, if I didn't have anywhere to go it was like the oldest dude of the street was in charge of us, and how knows where that led to. As opposed to when I was in Hawaii and we had a youth center and everyone just met up there, it was supervised, it wasn't hella G-Rated, it was still fun and cool, got in a little bit of trouble you know.

With regard to recommendations for promoting safety through addressing homelessness in the neighborhood, two participants specified programs that they thought would help the homeless population be more self sufficient. One participant said:

The Gospel Mission needs to have programs where homeless people can work and where they have programs where they can learn about computers and stuff, like workshops. I think the worst thing we could do is help them too much. If we help them too much then they are just going to be comfortable where they are at and always rely on whoever is helping them.

The other participant continued:

Maybe some things to help prevent homelessness would be to start by changing their attitude about rules, look at ways to help set up programs to teach how to accept rules of society. Provide assistance for mentally ill, Hire those who are capable for phone tech support rather than hiring overseas. Find programs that will make them useful, educate them on services that are

available to remedy their current situation. Have someone help them or teach them how to navigate through system.

When discussing barriers to funding needed for programs in the neighborhood, one participant expressed concerns that the schools may not be able to financially support improvements. Improvements to the school could address safety by making the school more able to help youth through more services and programs. Therefore, the participant stated that calling on community organizations to help could be a way to attain funding:

I don't know if the school because they don't have the funding or the budget. Or even if like the Rotary Club or like all these different civic minded community things would take a stand and do something with it.

Role of the City. In the context of promoting safety in at a macro level, the third sub-theme identified was the city. Five participants agreed that the city needs to play a major role in promoting safety in their neighborhoods. The participants agreed that the city needs to improve on ways that it could be more aware of the life in the neighborhood, thus acting according to the needs of the neighborhood and the residents.

One participant noted that the city is responsible for improving schools:

I think the responsibility falls on the city, this is an area with three schools in it and all three schools are, they're not the best schools. I think it would be on the city to take responsibility for providing those kids with a better environment.

Another participant stated that while the cities are responsible, they may not be aware of the issues needing to be addressed, "I think the city council needs to

address those issues, but they don't know, so maybe they need to come visit these neighborhoods. Have to live there for a week and see how you like it, you know.”

Another participant was in agreement that a way for the city to be aware is if they spent more time directly in the neighborhood:

Maybe they ought to come stay the night in the neighborhood you know? Sleep in the bush. I think that there should be not only street light but alley lights because there's a lot of traveling done through the alleys. Crosswalks in front of the schools. They don't even have a crosswalk. Or lights too, for the kids, they just hope they get to the other side safely. And why is that? Is it because it's right where the airport is? You know, they need to come and see what it looks like at day and night. Maybe they need to come talk to the neighbors in the neighborhood and see. Even though we are in the airport we still take ride in our neighborhood because that's where we grew up, that's where I am raising my kids and grandkids too. So they need to come see what it's like.

Other participants noted safety cautions that the city could provide such as safe traffic zones, but as noted above, residents would need to initiate the effort, “the neighborhood needs to get together and make a kind of like safe traffic zone for kids that live in this neighborhood that go to La Loma, to be able to cross the street and not be ran over.” Similarly, another participant was confused as to why the city would provide safety precautions for only certain locations in the community, “they are building sidewalks for them, streetlights and everything else for them. But like from Santa Cruz it's all lit up and everything over there, but one block over its dark.” They recommend that the city provide these safety necessities for their neighborhoods as well.

Local major corporations. With regard to safety being promoted at a macro level, the fourth sub-theme identified was the role that local major corporations could play. Four participants mentioned that major corporations in their community such as Gallo Winery and the Rotary Club have a responsibility to help promote safety within these neighborhoods. Two participants talked about Gallo Winery and the role the company should play in civic upkeep including funding for city amenities such as safety lights and cross walks at the schools. They also provided a context for their recommendation saying that Gallo used to do some of these in the past. The participants recommend that Gallo, the Rotary Club, and any other major corporations that are in these neighborhood play an active role in promoting safety. One participant said, “I think Gallo should play a role too because they live right there and take up a lot of the neighborhood. They should also help with light for the kids and stuff like that.” It was noted that Gallo Winery provides these amenities to parts of the community, while excluding certain neighborhoods within that community. The same participant continued to explain:

Gallo, they are in our neighborhood, but they don't do nothing for our neighborhood. My grandson went to Head Start at Orville Wright, Gallo didn't do nothing for that school. Then we took him this year to Wilson, and Gallo participates in that school and that neighborhood over there, I don't know why.

The participants talked of Gallo being a contributor to a lack of safety in their neighborhood by providing city amenities to one side of the neighborhood only and recommended that they play a more active role in their neighborhood as well. One of

these concerns is that Gallo is providing crossing lights for one school and neglecting the other school, which is on the side of the neighborhood where the participants live.

One participant recounted:

The Gallo side is nice and clean, there are lights so you can see, there are flashing lights so people can see and stop. I think they put that there because they are more concerned about their part of the neighborhood, for their workers as well as the violence that is around here, so that is the nice part of the neighborhood.

Another participant told their experience:

Even Gallo, they are in our neighborhood, but they don't do nothing for our neighborhood. My grandson went to Head Start at Orville Wright, Gallo didn't do nothing for that school. Then we took him this year to Wilson, and Gallo participates in that school and that neighborhood over there, I don't know why. They are over there taking all the houses on that side. I have lived on almost every street in the neighborhood, and I see that they haven't done anything for our neighborhood on this side of Santa Cruz Road. Gallo is taking over everything, they are building sidewalks for them, street lights and everything else for them. But from Santa Cruz it's all lit up and everything over there, but one block over its dark.

Changing stigma associated with children living in low-income

neighborhoods. In the context of promoting safety at a macro level, the sixth sub-theme identified was changing the stigma associated with children living in low income neighborhoods. Two participants discussed the ways in which change in bias, stigma, and relationships could promote safety in these neighborhoods. One participant stated that the way we approach children could motivate them to not participate in violence:

We need to inspire these kids, find out what drives them, what gets their attention, we gotta stay on them, show interest in things they are interested in, mold them and nurture them to be the best at whatever they want to be. They

look up to people, we could be a powerful influence if we take some time. They are going to be our future.

The other participant talked of their experience connecting with a juvenile delinquent from an income segregated neighborhood and the relationship being the biggest catalyst for the youth to open up:

When I was going into the juvenile hall, the people would warn me that the kids were manipulative or this and that, and to me I was just like yeah okay I kinda went in there scared like the last minute I was like, 'oh man I don't know if I'm gonna be able to do this, I look 12, this girl is gonna hate me.' I literally sat down and told myself not to think about where I was at, not to think about what she was going to share with me, just take it for what it is, a conversation. And I was super shocked, she was the sweetest girl I ever met, she was really shy and reserved, had all these dreams she had for school, granted a really different perspective on how to attain those goals, but she was like any other kid and we were able to build a really good relationship with each other. I think outside of that setting and taking this into neighborhoods, it's just a matter of being aware. It's a matter of explaining to people, yeah they are a little more abrasive but at the end of the day they are still kids, and there is still a way to break through to that innocent kid who just wants to talk to you about his or her day, you know?

The participant continued to explain that labeling and stigmatizing these neighborhood or the residents does not promote safety. She continued to say that changing these labels and stigma could have an effect of promoting safety:

For the community to to understand that labeling doesn't make things better and that people like these kids aren't as scary as they are perceived to be. A lot of it is retaliation too, you know, like there's been even from their younger years, low income populations getting stigmatized in that sense and then their income level and things that are surrounded by them are gonna lead them down certain life decisions and it just kinda escalates from there, and it's not necessarily like the life that they wanted to live. I think people have this idea that these kids wake up one day and just decide 'oh, I'm gonna be gang related' or 'it's so cool to be gang related', but it's really a survival method.

She continued to explain that because of this stigma, the city may use that as an excuse to not fund these neighborhoods:

I think people see it as a poor neighborhood and there's a stereotype that the kids that live there are up to no good anyway, they are Hispanic, they won't make it very far, it's a poor community, it's a stubborn community. I don't think there is a priority to put money into those neighborhoods because they think it's just a waste of effort, time, money.

So, when asked how we change these stigmas, she reiterated relationships through communication, empathy, and understanding of the person in their environment.

When it comes to gangs, she stated:

I think it comes down on all responsible adults, just having more of an honest conversation with these kids. I feel like most of the time when they hear it it's just 'don't do this, don't do that', but I don't think that there's a general understanding in the gang community and troubled youth, I don't think there's an understanding of how they affect people. So I think having an honest conversation about the ways they are affecting other people, the way that they could be with other people, and the difference that that would make just gives them a sense of responsibility and I guess it would make them feel like more of a part of society rather than excluded and that they have to live the life that they live because they don't fit anywhere else.

When asked how to build better relationships with the youth in these neighborhoods she explained that telling someone they are doing something wrong and simply handing out resources is not enough:

I think usually people assume that they don't want to talk about it but I think there are ways to get them to talk about it. And I think that in order to be able to do that you really have to be able to create a really comfortable environment. Just through organizations where they work closely with individuals and just building those trusting relationships, and not just, 'why do you do this, you shouldn't do that.' Just an honest conversation of, 'hey what's going on in your life, why are these things happening?' Assuming that if they are given certain opportunities that they are just going to come up on them and their lives are going to change. I think it takes more than that, I

think it takes genuine friendships, relationships with people who aren't involved. I think that that opens a different path. It's one thing to work with someone and assume that, 'oh well, I gave them this resource, that's enough,' but being a genuine friend, being someone who's going to partake in their lives give them that opportunity to be like, 'okay I'm capable of having a friend like this, I'm capable of having more friends and changing my life and being part of something different.' Say I was someone that needed help and you're giving that help, to me that's saying okay I can do all these things that this person does, but I'm still not like that person. So, I think that if you were to become my genuine friend, somebody who sees me as an equal, then I can see myself as more capable of using those resources rather than thinking, 'oh well she can do that because she's good at that or that's what her life is like.'

She continued to talk about how current policies are not beneficial:

I think that's something that could be looked at from a macro level, just working to change that stigma that the person put themselves in that position, drug and substance abuse, and poor life decisions put them in that place and just coming to terms and realize that the policies and stuff that are currently in place aren't there to benefit the homeless people, they are there to benefit us who want them out of our sight.

Lastly, she discussed ways in which we can build community relationships between these neighborhoods and the rest of the city as a means to unveil that the condition of these communities is not a reflections of the individuals who reside there, and bring about empathy:

I think that it just takes bringing communities together and bringing people who haven't seen South Modesto, West Modesto, and Airport before in and showing them what people in their community are living like and I know that Modesto isn't a rich city and our rich aren't crazy rich, but there needs to be an understanding of us needing to be nicer to each other because there's a lot of people who have struggled way more than us, and being aware of that can create a whole different community.

How the residents can get involved. When discussing what macro action needs to be taken to promote safety and address violence in the neighborhoods, two

participants discussed another sub-theme as ways in which they can get involved as well as the importance of getting involved in macro level change. They described possible ways in which they could learn how to advocate or have someone advocate on their behalf:

Getting a petition promoting the changes you want made, attend city hall meetings, educate, provide neighborhood meetings to discuss changes wanted/needed and designate a person or group to follow through. Find advocates or someone with the know how to help navigate through the process.

While there were barriers to political advocacy, one participant stated it was up to the community to advocate for themselves to promote safety in their neighborhood, “I think either the city or county, but it also has to be the community stepping up and making a petition.” Another participant stated they felt the same way, “I would make complaints, complaints make things happen.”

Summary

With regard to each of the three research questions, several main themes and sub themes were identified. First, to address how residents in income segregated neighborhoods define violence, participants described violence as either explicit forms of violence such as gangs and gun violence; or as factors that contributed to a lack of safety such as the absence of street lights. The examples that the residents detailed when defining violence painted a picture of the fear provoking environments in which they live.

After explaining what violence looks like in their neighborhoods, residents explained how they navigate their way through that violence. The residents described micro level methods such as vigilance, and mezzo level strategies which included building relationships with their neighbors and involving or not involving law enforcement as common ways in which they manage the violence. These data gave insight to the dichotomy residents in income segregated neighborhoods face when figuring out how to navigate their way through violence.

Residents also provided recommendations for what they think needs to be done to address violence in their neighborhoods at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Before being able to give recommendations, residents provided insight into the barriers they face in regard to addressing violence. The main barrier they discussed was the fear they have about potential retaliation from other residents if they did take action against violence in their neighborhoods. After discussing the barriers such as fear, the residents continued to describe recommendations to promote safety in their neighborhoods. The most notable theme related to mezzo level involvement of the schools in their neighborhood and how they play a key role in promoting safety. All of these major themes were evident in the various neighborhoods that were examined in this study. Moving forward, these themes will be related to past literature in hopes to provide insight to implications for social work practice and policy, as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

Discussion

This study examined three aspects of violence in income segregated neighborhoods. First, residents defined what violence is like in their neighborhoods. Second, residents discussed ways in which they navigate through the violence in their neighborhoods. Third, residents described what they think needs to happen to address violence and promote safety within their neighborhoods. This chapter summarizes the major findings from the study and compares and contrasts those findings to the existing literature. Next this chapter discusses the implications for social work practice and policy. Finally, this chapter identifies the limitations of the study, and provides recommendations for future research.

Major findings

In regard to defining violence, it was interesting that the participants did not identify structural issues or segregation relating to violence. Even with a grounded theory study and multiple interviews, participants still saw violence as a community responsibility. In terms of what violence looks like in the neighborhood, all participants described forms of explicit violence in their neighborhoods. In the context of these income segregated neighborhoods, explicit violence was defined as violence that is more physically harmful or threatening in nature. These forms of

violence described by the residents included gangs and gun violence. Similarly, the WHOVPA's (2017) definition of violence encompasses gang and gun violence as physical or threatened forces of violence against people, groups, and communities. This formal definition from WHOVPA (2017) affirms the experiences of the residents in these neighborhoods.

The participants also noted factors that led to a lack of safety in their neighborhoods and provided an environment in which violence could thrive. Participants explained how the lack of basic city amenities like street lights led to them feeling unsafe and allowed for more crime. Research confirms that income segregated neighborhoods have a higher probability of being left without certain city safety amenities such as street lights (Parson et al., 2015). This factor alone puts residents at greater risk for experiencing consequences such as violence and even death (Maciag, 2014). This fact was echoed in the experiences of the residents in this study. Thus, in addition to explicit violence, income segregated neighborhoods are experiencing many different types of violence and are set within an environment that exacerbates violence in general. This implies that the types of violence residents experience is complex, accordingly it needs to be addressed with multi-disciplinary strategies that focus on the full array of issues rather than individual fragments of violence.

The participants further described ways in which they deal with the violence in their neighborhoods on a micro level. One common strategy the residents used to

navigate through the violence was constantly being vigilant as a way to avoid danger. Participants identified the safety precautions they were taking such as keeping their house doors locked, not walking around outside alone or at night (and not letting their children walk alone), carefully choosing who to associate with, and always being aware of their surroundings. Voisin et al. (2010) found similar strategies were used by African American youth who resided in violent neighborhoods. However, the adolescents in that study described their strategies as avoidance, meaning they avoided any situation that had the potential for violence. This strategy of avoidance and vigilance seems to be more common among children and females. After examining explicit forms of violence and the factors that contribute to a lack of safety, it is quite clear that residents would embody a sense of vigilance in their neighborhoods. It seems that the residents live in constant fear of the unknown and are watchful of everything and everyone; one has to ask the question as to what impact do these feelings/experiences have on the individuals and the communities and their overall well-being and is that what they should be having to live with in the United States in 2017?

In addition to staying vigilant, participants discussed ways in which they attempted to build a sense of community as a way to prevent violence and promote safety in their neighborhoods. They were trying to work together to maintain the cleanliness of their neighborhood as well as looking out for one another. Literature supports the notion that residents in income segregated take actions that promote a

sense of community through collective monitoring, meaning watching out for each other's children and houses (Jarrett et al., 2013). This means that if residents felt safe enough to associate with their neighbors, then they would be able to promote safety within their neighborhoods by working together. However, as mentioned by Voisin et al. (2010), resident interaction is not common in income segregated neighborhoods due to the fear of violence. This goes to show that residents have a desire to connect with their neighbors, but may not be able to address violence in a way that could foster that connection.

Research has shown that when residents are provided training programs that teach how to address violence either through direct or indirect ways they opt for directly addressing it through effectively intervening (Ohmer et al., 2010). This finding implies that, while residents desire this sense of community, the fear of violence may prevent them from fully being able to attain that connectedness (Voisin et al., 2010); thus, if trained, neighborhood residents will take a more proactive role in appropriately directly addressing violence if needed. Again, participants seem to want to build a sense of community and are attempting to engage in activities that will help build that community. Addressing violence with including the community members as active co-participants, such as providing resident training on how to approach violence would not only address the issue, but also equip residents with the skills, safety, and confidence to connect with other community members.

Along with residents navigating through violence by being vigilant and attempting to form relationships with their neighbors, they also discussed the role law enforcement plays. Findings with regard to the involvement of law enforcement were contradictory; four participants explained why they do not favor involving law enforcement, and three participants talked about why they do decide to involve law enforcement. Fear was the driving factor among residents not wanting to involve law enforcement. The fears related to the fear of consequences from other residents in the community (specifically gang members), fear of consequences due to illegal immigration status, and fear that law enforcement would not be willing to help. Residents who were willing to involve law enforcement stated it was a way that prevented them from having to directly address violence. So, they were relying on law enforcement to address their fear. With the current state of unease regarding police officers, it is clear that the relationship between residents and law enforcement, specifically police officers, needs to be improved (Sackett, 2016). However, past research shows that multi-disciplinary coalitions in income segregated neighborhoods help build a better relationship between residents and police officers as well as other professionals through constant communication and working together for a common purpose (Spergel & Grossman, 1997). Thus, one idea could be the formation of coalitions including all stakeholders from the community, including law enforcement, which would help address violence and the relationship between them and the residents would also be improved.

Participants were also asked their recommendations for what they felt would be effective means to address violence in the communities. Before being able to discuss what needs to happen to promote safety in their neighborhoods, residents were inclined to address barriers to promoting safety at the macro level. A major barrier across resident's experiences was fear of retaliation from community members who do not want change. The residents recounted times when people in their neighborhoods spoke out against violence and were killed. Lindelof and Chavez (2016) covered a story of a woman who tried starting a neighborhood watch group due to a chain of break-ins, only to be shot and killed by a drive-by that targeted her home. While this barrier of fear was a major concern, some participants shared they would be comfortable learning more indirect ways of advocating such as writing petitions, or having someone advocate on their behalf. However, research shows, and is discussed above, that when residents are trained in how to confront violence, they prefer direct forms of confrontation (Ohmer et al., 2010). The findings further show that while residents do have a desire to advocate, until other interventions happen to make residents feel safe, they will not participate in macro level political advocacy.

Due to the severe violence and fear in income segregated neighborhoods, residents have a strong desire for outside help in promoting safety. Schools were identified as a key player in promoting safety. Residents saw schools as playing a key role due to their connectedness with the community as well as the city, therefore, being able to bridge the gap between residents and macro level entities. Past research

shows extraordinary success in grassroots, multi-disciplinary coalitions put in place at schools in similar communities in terms of youth's academic success and residents' willingness to advocate politically (Aisenburg & Herrenkohl, 2008; Dupper & Poertner, 1997; Glaser et al., 2006; Gomez et al., 2015; Nation et al., 2002; Spergel & Grossman, 1997). By using the schools as a means/place to gather residents, community organizations, law enforcement, and city officials, there is a chance of better communication and social change. Literature also points out the ineffectiveness of fragmented systems of care, furthering the evidence showing that multi-disciplinary strategies are necessary for addressing violence and promoting safety in income segregated neighborhoods. Addressing violence through multi-disciplinary coalitions that include residents, social workers, schools, police officers, community organizations, local major corporations, and the city would build community cohesiveness and provide an environment where residents would feel safe. However, there are little or no existing multi-disciplinary coalitions as well as little to no training for social workers on how to set up these coalitions.

Implications for Social Work Practice, Policy, and Education

In terms of social work practice, the findings of this research have several implications; one being that the current micro-focused social work paradigm must shift to encompass macro level practice. While micro level social work practice is highly valuable in specific situations, macro practice is unconditionally necessary when addressing community needs and paradigms of oppression and domination.

This paradigm shift starts with a change in the social work educational system. It is explicitly stated in the mission and goals of the California State University, Stanislaus' Master of Social Work Program that graduate students will leave the program equipped to promote social change within communities. However, the curriculum could be improved so that it offers more opportunities to support this mission and goal. Additions to the curriculum could include adding community-based social work practice electives that focus on community organization and the role of social workers in neighborhood-specific social change. Social workers need to be trained the macro practice models of community organizing and social action, theoretically and practically. While political advocacy is emphasized in this MSW program through participation in Lobby days, the same type of hands-on opportunities are not provided for macro level interventions. It would be incredibly effective if the program could provide real hands on experiences/training in engaging in community organizing, community development, coalition building kinds of efforts to ease the students' fear of and lack of preparedness with macro level social work practice.

Furthermore, developing a grassroots, multi-disciplinary coalition in partnership with the community would be a phenomenal project for the future, whether it be a graduating project or a student-wide project in a macro-based class. This researcher would play an active role in introducing the MSW group to the study participants (with their permission) to help start the process. After the development of

this coalition, it could be used as an internship for future students in order to continue students' participation in community-based, macro social work practice.

There are also specific implications for social work practice, for example the role that community-based social workers can play in the development of community coalitions. Research has shown great success with community coalitions in addressing violence and promoting a context for safety in neighborhoods, however, there is a lack of emphasis placed on the importance of these types of coalitions. The development of community coalitions would entail social workers engaging with schools, city officials, and law enforcement to mobilize community residents in order to promote social change in the neighborhoods to better address community needs and concerns.

Another significant role that the social work profession can play is in the development of training programs for community members. As previously discussed, residents are more likely to take a proactive role in addressing violence if they have training on how to do so. Community-based social workers could be equipped with the information needed to train residents to do this. This would be an empowering and sustainable way for residents to be able to promote safety in their neighborhoods.

Along with changes to social work practice and education, social work policy needs to be examined as well. In regard to social work policy, the traditional paradigm is one of a top-down approach. This means that, instead of residents deciding what needs to happen in their neighborhoods to address violence, it is

decided for them by governing bodies. While this research did find that residents would like assistance from different entities in addressing violence, it is still up to the residents themselves to identify what issues need to be addressed and how. Another paradigm is that these governing bodies focus on individual, fragmented issues or generalize national issues to individual communities. It is known from this research that each neighborhood is unique in terms of its issues. Thus, in order for violence to be addressed in an effective way, the current policy and paradigms need to adjust to have residents be the expert and lead the way for what change needs to happen in their neighborhoods and how.

Limitations of the Study

One major limitation of this study was the limited time to conduct the study in regard to the design. This study utilized a Grounded Theory design, meaning that multiple interviews were required in order to get as much information as needed until there were no additional major themes identified. Had there been more time, more themes may have emerged. Another limitation of this study was that there were no African American participants. Given the current issues of police brutality against African Americans, input from that population may have provided vastly different and valuable insight. Another limitation that is specific to the researcher is the desire to go beyond the requirements of this study and assist the residents in promoting safety in their neighborhoods, but not having the time or resources to do so, possibly perpetuating an oppressive form of research that is historically known to happen to

people who are marginalized. These data and limitations suggest the need for future research.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the results from this study as well as the limitations experienced in this study, several recommendations for future research are clear: Participatory Actions Research (PAR) and more time to do a thorough Grounded Theory study. One recommendation for future research is to conduct PAR as a way to focus on social change in these income segregated neighborhoods with the voice of the residents at the forefront of that change. PAR engages all stakeholders, in this case the residents, as co-researchers and not as participants in order to address issues in the community (issues that the residents have identified); this is an anti-oppressive research methodology. Future PAR research could follow-up with residents in this study as a way to engage the residents in action to address the neighborhood issues of violence. The goal of PAR is to hopefully result in social action, which would be the best for issues related to oppression. Future research could also allow for more time to do a thorough grounded theory study. The vast amount of data from this particular study was larger than expected. Thus, it is assumed that allowing for more time to do a thorough Grounded Theory study would have the potential for more themes to emerge, therefor allowing for the residents to be better served in their neighborhoods.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONS FOR THE FIRST INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

1. How would you describe the neighborhood you live in?
2. What is it like for you to live in the neighborhood you live in?
 - a. What do you like about it?
 - b. What don't you like about it?
 - c. How has it impacted your life and decisions you make?
3. How would you define or explain safety?
4. How would you define or explain violence?
5. What actions have your community or you taken in response to violence in your neighborhood?
6. What has been the outcome of those actions?
7. Have these experiences influenced you in being motivated to organize or participate in social work/political advocacy etc.? How?
8. What are your ideas for how this violence can be addressed in your community? By individuals? By groups or organizations? By the community, as a whole?

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

I, Brianna Bossard, am a graduate student in the Masters of Social Work Program at California State University, Stanislaus. I am conducting a research study as part of my Master's thesis requirements on Income Segregated Neighborhoods and Violence: A Paradigm Shift. The study explores residents' experiences of violent neighborhoods and what they feel should be done to address the issues. The hope for this research is that this research will promote active participation of the residents themselves rather than groups in authority making decisions for the community and its people.

As a resident of a high crime, low income neighborhood, you are being asked to participate in the study. If you decide to partake in this study, you will be required to participate in either two group discussions or two individual interviews, whichever you prefer.

The interviews will take approximately one to two hours to complete. The interviews will be audio recorded with your permission. Once the first interview is completed, I will evaluate the data and set up the follow-up interview to get more clarity and better understand the responses from the first interview.

If you decide to take part in the group discussions, you will be in a group of 4-6 participants (who meet the same criteria as you for the study). Another student from the MSW program will be assisting during the focus group to help capture accurate responses on a flip-chart.

Upon completion of the study, all audio recordings will be deleted and notes shredded. The results will be published in aggregate; no individual identifying information will be reported. All information collected will be protected from inappropriate disclosure under the law. If you incur any discomfort as a result of participating in the study, please contact: Stanislaus County Emergency Support at (209) 558-4600, or the Stanislaus County Suicide Prevention and Crisis Services at 1-800-273-TALK or 1-800-SUICIDE, or San Joaquin County Crisis Clinic 24 hour at (209) 468-8686.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. You can choose to not answer any question, or you may also stop participating in the interviews anytime without any penalties. While there are no direct benefits to you, the social work profession can potentially benefit from the general data obtained through your participation as it may help to develop a better understanding of residents' experiences in high crime neighborhoods and provide more innovative ideas for how community organizers and

social workers can play a role in collaboration with residents to address issues of crime and violence.

If you have any questions about this research project please contact the researcher, me Brianna Bossard at (209) 818-2281 or my faculty sponsor Shradha Tibrewal at (209) 667-3951. If you have any questions regarding your rights and participation as a research subject, please contact the Campus Compliance Officer by phone (209) 667-3794 or email IRBAdmin@csustan.edu.

Thank you for your participation.

Name:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONS FOR THE SECOND INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

Some of these questions require brainstorming. The goal is to come up with as many ideas as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. While brainstorming is occurring, postpone any judgement or conversation about the ideas until the brainstorm is over.

1. Do you agree or disagree that directly addressing the violence in your neighborhood (i.e. taking personal action towards violent activities/people) may be dangerous to you?
2. What have been some barriers to action against the violence in your neighborhood for you personally? What has kept you from taking action against violence?
3. What role, if any, do the schools play for youth in your neighborhood?
4. Do you feel like schools in your neighborhood could be improved? If so, what could be done to improve them and who is responsible for doing that?
5. If you could decide what to do about gangs, what would it be and who would do it?
 - What could be done to prevent gangs?
 - What are the worst possible things that could be done to address gangs?
6. If you could decide what to do about homelessness, what would it be and who would do it?
 - What could be done to prevent homelessness?

- What are the worst possible things that could be done to address homelessness?
7. If you could decide what to do about the lack of basic needs (sidewalks, street lights, crosswalks, speed bumps, cleanliness, etc.), what would it be and who would do it?
- What are the worst possible things that could be done to address the lack of basic needs?