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You Could Get Killed Any Day in Hollygrove: A Qualitative Study of Neighborhood-Level Homicide

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A Qualitative Study of Neighborhood-Level Homicide

A Dissertation

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Abstract

New Orleans experienced elevated homicide rates throughout the 30 years between 1985 and 2015. The city's homicides were especially prominent in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities. This study explored the lived experiences of residents from one such neighborhood, Hollygrove. Using qualitative methods of individual interviews, focus groups, and participant observation, the study explored homicide through three prominent theoretical lenses, Social Disorganization Theory, Subcultural theories, and Institutional Anomie Theory, to better understand the conditions in a high-homicide neighborhood that help to explain neighborhood-level violence. While existing theories of homicide causation have taken a predominately quantitative approach that compare high-homicide neighborhoods, I took an ethnographic approach informed by a social constructivist paradigm to test existing theories against the lived experiences of those whose daily lives were impacted by neighborhood-level homicide in a single community. Interviews were conducted with neighborhood residents, community leaders, neighborhood politicians, and police officials.

The data indicated three conditions connected to high- or low-homicide risk in the community. The neighborhood's values-orientation moved between subcultural values and prosocial values. Structural conditions in the community shifted between marginalization and enhanced social capital. Finally, neighborhood boundaries were found to vacillate between porous and rigidly defensive. Each of these conditions impacted the neighborhood's ability to enact collective efficacy and to create a milieu that either resisted or enhanced the likelihood of homicide. While none of the existing theories was sufficient to explain neighborhood homicide, elements of each were present in the data.

Keywords:

Homicide

Hollygrove

Murder

Neighborhood

Qualitative

Chapter 1

Introduction

In January of 2002, 17-year-old Brandon Aggison was shot in front of the Olive Superette at the Corner of General Ogden and Olive Streets in Hollygrove. Just months away from graduating high school, he had returned to the neighborhood to visit childhood friends from the days before his mother moved the family to a safer community. During his visit a shooting erupted and Brandon was used as a human shield. He was shot, dropped onto the sidewalk, and the intended target jumped into an escape vehicle. The corner had become one of the most dangerous in a city that averaged almost one homicide per day. "The Big Easy" had become "The Murder Capital of the United States."

Since 1985 the city's murder rate remained high, vacillating between a low of 27.1 murders per 100,000 residents in 1985 to a high of 94.7 in 2007 (FBI Uniform Crime Reporting, 2015). The raw numbers ranged from a low of 150 murders in 2014 to 424 in 1994 (FBI Uniform Crime Reporting, 2015). For the 29-year period of 1985 to 2015 the city experienced 7,334 total murders (FBI Uniform Crime Reporting, 2015; Lane & Bullington, 2016). Charts 1 and 2 graphically represent the raw number of New Orleans murders between 1985 and 2014, and the rate per 100,000 residents. Data for each of these years, except 2005, 2013, 2014, and 2015 were drawn from the FBI Unified Crime Reports (UCR). Van Landingham's (2007) data for number of murders and murder rate was used for 2005, a year in which FBI data was unavailable. Raw murder numbers in 2013 and 2014 are based upon the UCR data, while 2015 data was drawn from the New Orleans Times Picayune (Lane & Bullington, 2016). Population estimates to calculate murder rates for 2013 to 2015 were drawn from the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center (2016).

Chart 1: Murder Counts, New Orleans, 1985-2015
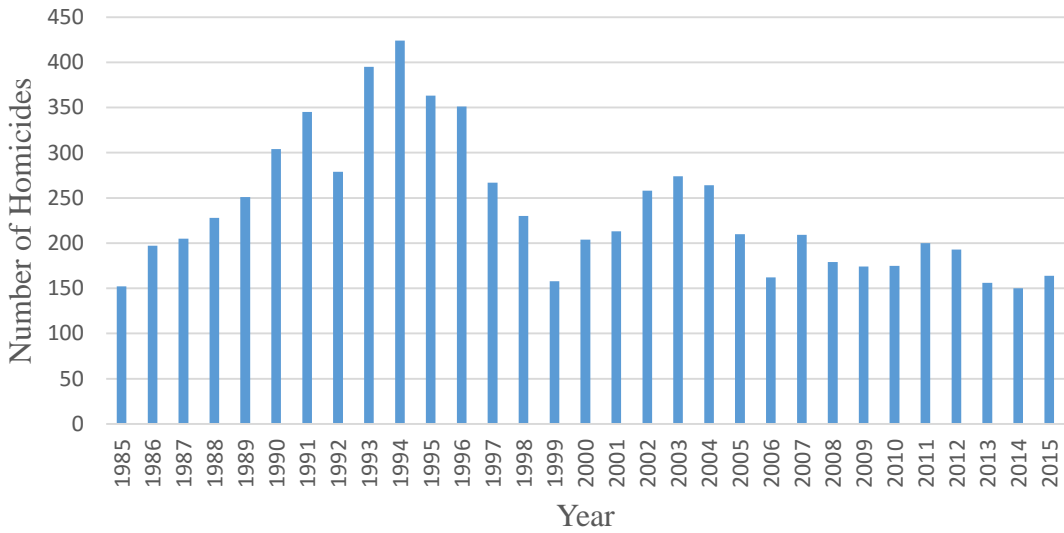
Chart 2: Murder Rates, New Orleans, 1985-2015
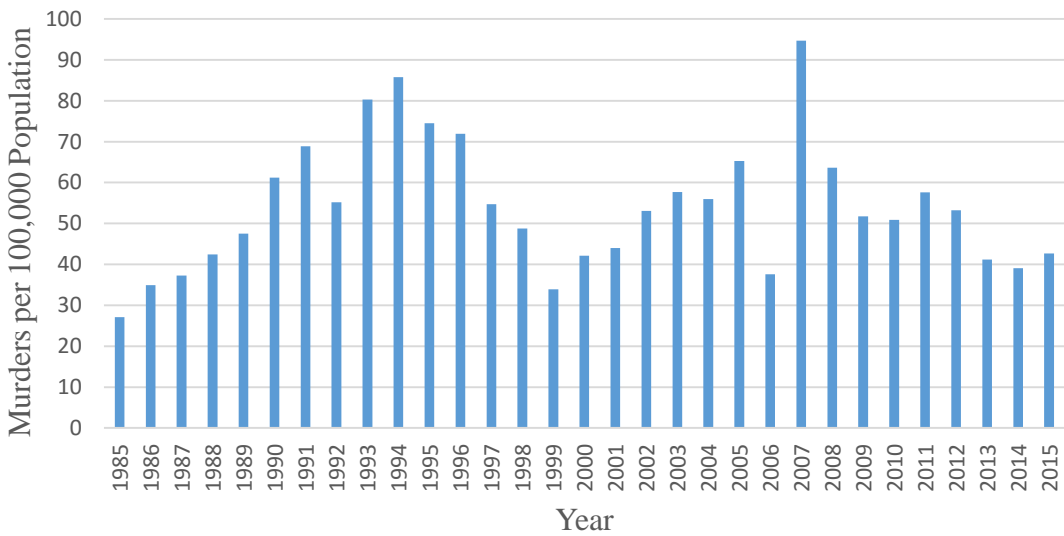
The majority of the city's homicide victims, as well as their murderers were young, African American males. Wellford, Bond and Goodison (2011), in a review of New Orleans Police Department crime data from 1985 to 2010, noted that over half of those arrested for homicide were 23 years of age or younger (p. 15), 97.1% were African American, and 95.1%

were male (p. 16). They were also known to the police: 82% had prior offenses, 58.8% were

violent offenders, 57.6% were drug offenders and 41.2% were charged with firearm offenses (p.

17). Victims were 86.5% male and 91.5% African American (Wellford et. al., 2011, p. 12).

Homicides in New Orleans were concentrated in specific neighborhoods. In 2012 the

city targeted three neighborhoods with high numbers of homicides for significant intervention:

St. Roch, Central City and the Seventh Ward. All three high-homicide communities shared

demographic characteristics: a majority African American population, mean income below the

city average, a percentage living below poverty higher than the city, a higher number of renters

than homeowners, educational attainment well below the city's average and high numbers of

vacant homes.

Table 1: Demographic Comparison of High Homicide Neighborhoods

	St. Roch	Central City	Seventh Ward	New Orleans	United States
% Af. American	91.5	74.2	87.4	59.6	12.2
mean income	$27,400	$39,200	$32,442	$59,952	$70,883
% below poverty	33.9	37.9	44.1	24.4	13.8
% renters	55	76.9	64.8	52.2	34.9
% less than High School Education	33.6	30	30.1	16.7	15.2
% vacant houses	37.7	39.5	38.3	25.1	11.4

Source: Greater New Orleans Community Data Center analysis of 2010 U.S. Census data

The Hollygrove neighborhood of New Orleans was similar in many ways to the city's

three target communities: 93.9% of its residents were African American, mean income was

$33,113, 49.3% of residents rented their homes, 32.9% of homes were unoccupied, and 32.4% of

residents earned less than the federal poverty standard.   One difference was educational

attainment; only 18.3% of Hollygrove residents had less than a high school diploma (Greater

New Orleans Community Data Center, 2014). Like the three target neighborhoods, Hollygrove

had a reputation for lethal violence, earned between the early 1980s and Katrina's landfall.

Based upon statistics provided by the NOPD's second district, between 2010 and 2015 the

neighborhood's homicide rate ranged from a high of 182.77 in 2012 to a low of 45.69 in both

2010 and 2015. With the exception of 2010 the neighborhood's homicide rate exceeded the

city's.   Hollygrove's high homicide rate dropped substantially since 2012. This suggested that

Hollygrove residents might have a perspective on homicide which may reflect both an

understanding of the connection between neighborhood and lethal violence, and what

neighborhoods might do to reduce it.

Chart 3: Hollygrove and New Orleans Homicide Rates 2010-2015
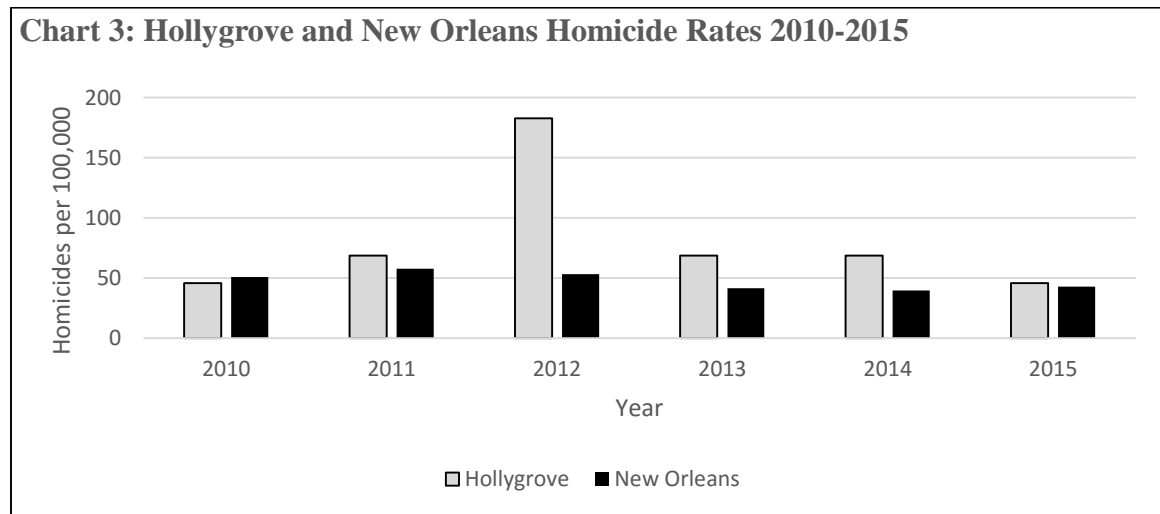
In 2014 there were 137 homicides in the city of New Orleans which equaled a citywide

homicide rate of 39.9 per 100,000 residents (number of homicides multiplied by 100,000 and

divided by total population of city according to census data). By comparison, Central City's

homicide rate was 115.5, St. Roch's was 150.8, the Seventh Ward's was 98.1 and Hollygrove's

was 68.5. The 2014 national homicide rate for cities with more than 250,000 residents,

according to the FBI's Unified Crime Statistics was 9.3. More affluent neighborhoods told a different story. The Garden District, West Riverside and the Lakeshore/Lake Vista neighborhoods experienced no murders in 2014. Demographically these neighborhoods were far different than the aforementioned high-homicide neighborhoods. When compared with the city's average, each of these neighborhoods had fewer African American, higher mean income, lower poverty, more education and fewer vacant homes. While West Riverside's renters slightly exceeded the city's average, the other two communities had more homeowners than renters. The difference between high and low homicide communities suggests that neighborhood violence is related to demographics.

Table 2: Demographic Comparison of Low Homicide Neighborhoods

	Garden District	Lakeshore/ Lake Vista	West Riverside	New Orleans	United States
% Af. American	3.2	2.1	22.8	59.6	12.2
mean income	$128,701	$125,473	$74,441	$59,952	$70,883
% below poverty	6.2	4.0	12.6	24.4	13.8
% renters	47.3	16.2	54	52.2	34.9
% less than High School Education	2.2	2.0	12.5	16.7	15.2
% vacant houses	12.9	12.0	13.3	25.1	11.4

In New Orleans, as in other U.S. cities, homicide rates vary by neighborhood. Thus a city's aggregate homicide rate only tells part of the story; each neighborhood is a chapter in the

overall tale. This study focused upon the Hollygrove neighborhood, one with a reputation for

violence but also for recent innovations that appear to have reduced violence in the community.

Statistics provided by The New Orleans Police Department for the years 2010 through

2015 indicate that Hollygrove had more shootings during the period than the city average. There

was complete information on victims of both shootings and homicides, the data regarding

aggressors was incomplete. In some cases there was no data on the aggressor, in others the race

and gender was identified but not the age. During this period there were 81 shootings in

Hollygrove and 24 homicides. A total of 53 cases had incomplete data on the aggressors, only

nine of the homicides were complete.

The data were consistent with the findings of Wellford et al (2011), both victims and

offenders were black, male and young. All of the identified aggressors and victims in

Hollygrove between 2010 and 2015 were African American. The majority of perpetrators were

male, 95.5% (Chart 4), as were the majority of victims, 88.8% (Chart 5). Most of the aggressors

were 23 or under, 73%, and 69 % of these were between the ages of 17 and 23 (Chart 6).

Likewise, the majority of victims, 56%, were under 23, and 47% were between the ages of 17

and 23 (Chart 7).

The hours between 6 PM and 12 AM were the most active times for shootings, with 45%

of total shootings (Chart 8) and 42% of homicides (Chart 9) occurring during these hours. The

number of shootings (Chart 10) ranged from a low of five in 2015 to a high of 27 in 2012, while

homicides reflected a low of two in 2015 to a high of nine in 2012 (one homicide in 2015 was

the result of a stabbing, this was the sole non-shooting homicide in the data).

From a neighborhood perspective, these homicides mirror national statistics. First,

shootings in the neighborhood were solely black-on-black, something not surprising given that

93% of its residents were African American. Second, both perpetrators and their victims were young adult males which was consistent with neighborhood violence citywide. Third, the majority of the violence occurred in the evenings after the typical work day concluded and when people returned to the neighborhood. Finally, between 2012 and 2015 there was a drastic reduction in the number of violent incidents occurring there.

Chart 4: Gender of Hollygrove Aggressors 2010-2015

Number of Shootings — Gender of Shooter

Year	m	f
2010	10	0
2011	13	1
2012	17	1
2013	9	0
2014	12	0
2015	3	1

■ m   ■ f

Chart 5: Gender of Hollygrove Victims 2010-2015

Number of Victims — Gender of Victims

Year	m	f
2010	13	0
2011	10	3
2012	25	2
2013	8	2
2014	9	2
2015	6	0

■ m   ■ f
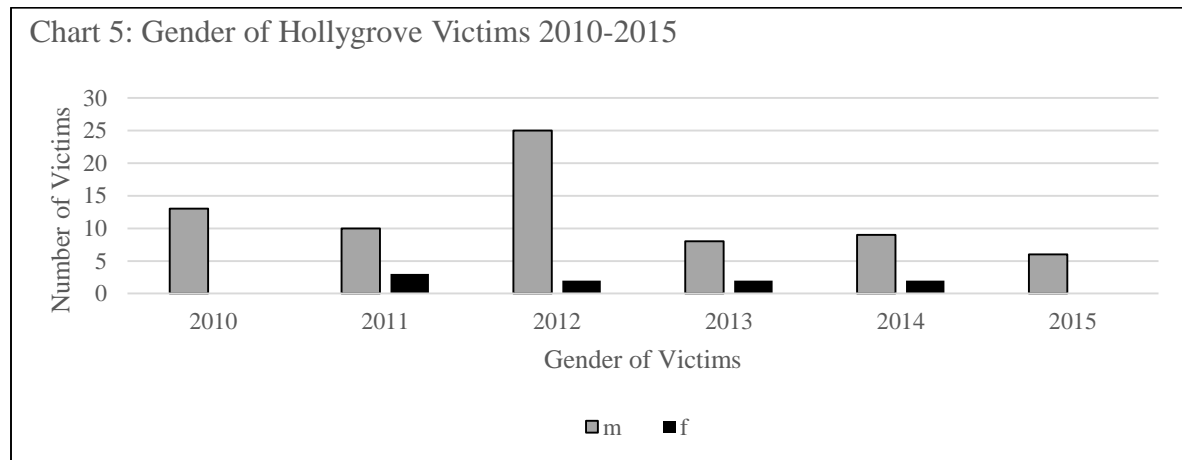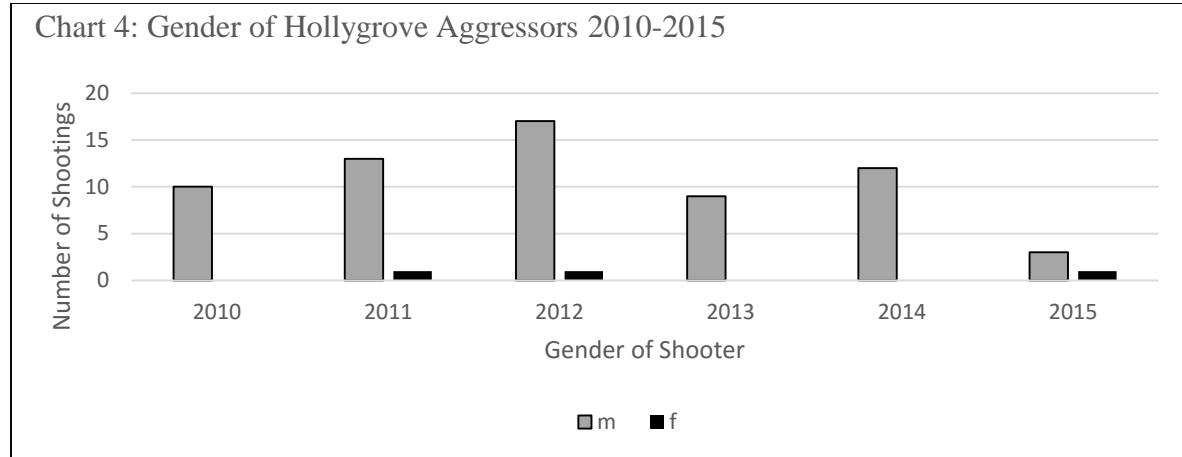
Chart 6: Aggressors by Age 2010-2015

Percentage of Total Shootings (y-axis: 0% to 80%)
Age of Aggressor (x-axis): birth to 10, 11 to 16, 17 to 23, 24 to 30, 31 to 40, 41 to 50, 51+
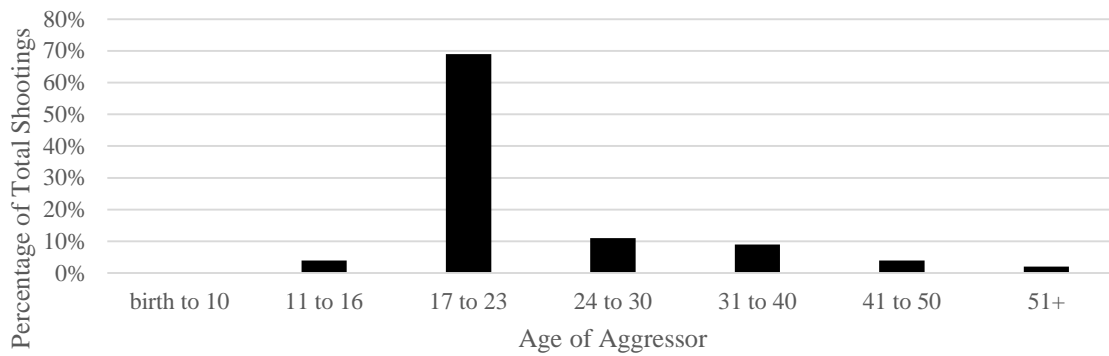
Chart 7: Victims by Age 2010-2015

Percentage of Total Shootings (y-axis: 0% to 50%)
Age of Deceased Victim (x-axis): birth to 10, 11 to 16, 17 to 23, 24 to 30, 31 to 40, 41 to 50, 51+

Chart 8: Times of Shootings

- 12 AM - 6 AM
- 6 AM - 12 PM
- 12 PM - 6 PM
- 6 PM - 12 AM
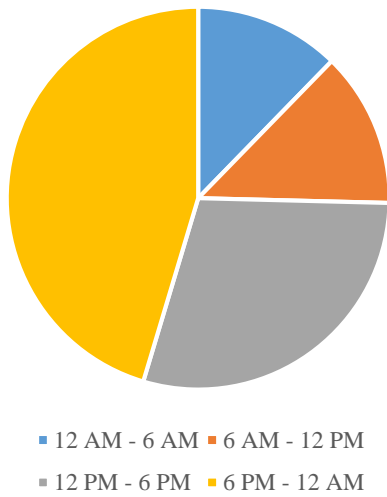
Chart 9: Times of Homicides

- 12 AM - 6 AM
- 6 AM - 12 PM
- 12 PM - 6 PM
- 6 PM - 12 AM

Chart 10: Shootings & Homicides in Hollygrove by Year
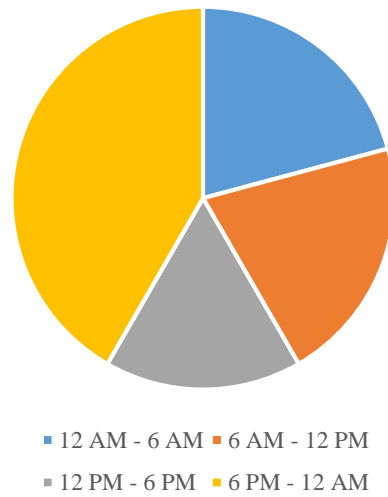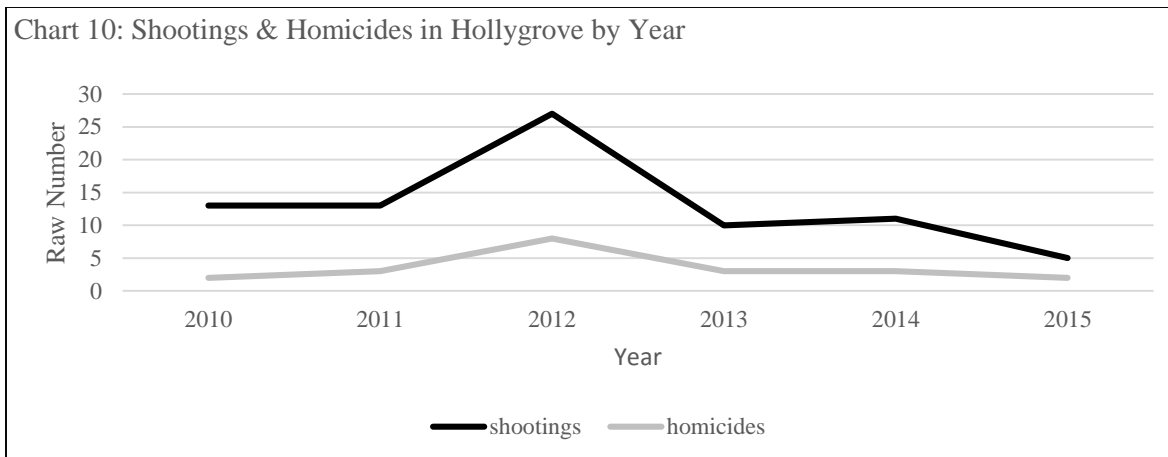
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experience of violence and homicide at the neighborhood level to better understand the factors contributing to the high homicide rate in urban neighborhoods. The study was informed by theories of neighborhood-level violence, i.e. social disorganization theory (Sampson, 2012), crime prevention through environmental design (Saville, 2009), anomie theory (Agnew, 2001; Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997) and subcultural theories (Anderson, 1999). It used a qualitative, ethnographic approach rooted in a social constructivist paradigm to elicit a grassroots understanding of the dynamics underlying neighborhood-level violence and homicide. Beginning with an individual homicide at a violent corner, the study expanded outwards into broader circles incorporating the views of those living nearest the corner, other neighborhood residents, community leaders, and city officials. Data gathered through semi-structured interviews and focus groups were supplemented by crime and census data, direct observation of homicide scenes, and photographs. The data were coded, compiled into themes, and situated within the existing literature pertaining to neighborhood-level violence.

Much of the existing research on neighborhood homicide was quantitative and studied communities on the aggregate level. This allows researchers to make comparisons between neighborhoods across metropolitan statistical areas and draw conclusions based upon the differences. Although this enhances the ability to generalize findings, macrosociological studies cannot explain the variations in lethal violence within an individual neighborhood. Lethal violence is differentially located at specific geographical locations and some places within a neighborhood are more dangerous than others. This pointed to a gap in existing research that could be addressed by limiting the focus of study to an individual neighborhood.

New Orleans' Hollygrove neighborhood had two factors that made it appropriate for such a study. First, the neighborhood had a reputation for murder that developed throughout the 1980s and 1990s and which continued to impact perceptions of those both inside and outside of the neighborhood. Second, there was a marked reduction in the number of homicides from 2012 to 2015. This demonstrated that residents had experience with homicide and homicide reduction strategies, lived experiences that proved fruitful to a study attempting to bridge the gap between micro and macrounderstandings of the phenomenon.

Brandon Aggison's murder was shocking to many. To those who lived near the corner of General Ogden and Olive, however, it wasn't a surprise. This corner was marked by violence. A complete understanding regarding what happens at corners like this throughout the city is not possible apart from the voices of those directly affected by the violence. They had valuable insights that served to richly inform my understanding of the phenomenon. Brandon's death, that corner, and this neighborhood began the study.

Hollygrove residents perceived a clash of values occurring in the neighborhood. On the one hand there was a conservativism expressed as they delineated a set of values reflective of the

mainstream culture. These included neighborliness, hard work and pride of ownership. All of the residents considered prosocial values to be important and fundamental. At the same time they described a neighborhood that was experiencing a clash between prosocial and subcultural values. There was widespread concern that the subcultural values had become stronger while prosocial values were no longer being transmitted to succeeding generations. This clash of values was especially pronounced in the younger participants who struggled to negotiate between the prosocial values of previous generations while daily living in a milieu where subcultural values demanded their attention. This clash of values forced a sort of bi-cultural response between home and work on the one hand, and life on the street on the other. The strongest value clash appeared to occur in the arena of conflict resolution. Many residents were concerned that the subculture's emphasis upon violence as a conflict resolution tactic had become normative and was destructive to the neighborhood.

The subculture was also seen as a destructive neighborhood force. The younger residents had a name for the subculture and its value system, Keeping It Real. This was a conflicted concept, however, as those who described its rules and values simultaneously pointed to its limitations. One key limitation was termed "outchere" by a focus group of 20-something males who suggested that adherence to subcultural values limited one's life chances by relegating their power and prestige to the neighborhood, while harming one's ability to function outside the neighborhood's boundaries. The subculture they described had rules that, when broken, invited violent retribution. They also described a neighborhood status hierarchy where those who adhered primarily to the rules and values of the subculture could rise to the top and become what they termed a Hood Star. The processes of succumbing to or resisting the subculture was an

important facet of one's chances beyond the neighborhood and comprised the final subthemes of the chapter.

Also concerning to those in the neighborhood was the illicit economy, especially the sale of drugs, and the violence that accompanied it. Residents saw drug sales as the primary force driving both homicide and the Keeping It Real subculture in the community. They pointed to alcohol beverage outlets as the homicide hotspots in the community, especially a two-block stretch in the neighborhood where a corner store operated during the day and a bar operated at night. Rather than being allies in their fight against drugs and violence, Hollygrove residents and the police both described the presence of the police as akin to an occupying force. This led to legal cynicism and mistrust, creating an environment where homicide flourished as residents felt powerless to stop it themselves but didn't trust police to act in their best interests.

In an atmosphere of legal cynicism residents extended their mistrust beyond the police to most outsiders. Many thought outside actors were creating the violent conditions inside the neighborhood rather than local residents. The illicit economy and the influx of drug dealers and buyers were one group of outsiders thought to be driving violence. Others were concerned about renters without an ownership stake in the community's well-being, especially those displaced from various public housing projects that had been restructured after Hurricane Katina. This mistrust of outsiders manifested itself in rigid definitions of who was from the neighborhood and who was not. An unfortunate consequence occurred when this mistrust was extended to those who potentially were able to enhance the neighborhood's social capital by providing valuable resources and connections. The result was increased marginalization and disconnection.

Katrina's widespread devastation of the neighborhood helped to reverse this. Many of the first returnees were elderly homeowners with strong adherence to prosocial values and a

desire to rebuild the neighborhood better than before. Neighborhood boundaries became more porous as these residents recognized the need for outside resources to assist them in the rebuilding. Outside resources flowed into the community from concerned agencies. Residents experienced improved relationships with politicians and police. Their social capital was enhanced and this resulted in a newfound collective efficacy or "social cohesion combined with shared expectations for social control" (Sampson, 2012, p. 27). This condition appeared to be connected with a significant reduction in neighborhood homicide after a peak in 2012.

Three constructs emerged as key to understanding the neighborhood's high- or low-homicide conditions. First, Hollygrove residents' value-orientation shifted from subcultural to prosocial values. Second, the neighborhood experienced a shift from marginalization to enhanced social capital. Finally, the neighborhood boundaries changed from rigidly defended against outside invaders to porously accepting of outside collaborative efforts toward community improvement. These three constructs appeared to determine whether the neighborhood experienced high collective efficacy and lower homicide, or low collective efficacy and higher homicide.

The interrelationship of these constructs may prove a beneficial avenue of future research. Sampson's (2012) research has shown that collective efficacy affects homicide. Anderson (1999) discussed the impact of values and street codes on neighborhood violence. Numerous studies have shown the connection between a neighborhood's structural marginalization and homicide (Sampson & Wilson, 1995; Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997; Savolainen, 2000; Maume & Lee, 2003). Little has been written about the porosity of neighborhood boundaries and its connection to homicide, making this an especially promising avenue for future homicide research.

Because this study was limited to a single neighborhood in New Orleans, further studies might explore whether these findings can be replicated elsewhere. One important challenge of the current study is the impact of Katrina. Few other neighborhoods experience the opportunity to completely rebuild their community. Further research is needed to determine whether these findings were unique to Hollygrove or if they have applicability in other, similar communities.

The study is divided into thirteen chapters. The first includes an abstract, introduction, and the purpose of the study. The second is devoted to theories of criminality and homicide and is divided into two sections: theories that attempt to explain crime from an individual or agency-based perspective and those that use a social-structural lens to do so. The third chapter is a review of the social-structural literature that informs neighborhood-based homicide and includes social disorganization studies, anomie studies, and subcultural studies. Chapter four addresses this study's design and includes explanations of the research design, methods, data, validity, reliability, and the role of the researcher.

Chapter five describes the setting of the study and describes the neighborhood as if one were walking from one border to the next down Olive Street. The community's marginalized status, its diversity, the epicenter of homicide at one corner, and its juxtaposition relative to more affluent neighborhoods is described. This chapter was included in the study to provide the reader perspective on the study and includes a map and pictures to better set the stage for the subsequent findings.

Chapter six is the first of five dedicated to a description of the study's findings. This chapter describes the clash between prosocial and subcultural values in the community. Subtopics include: resident concerns regarding the failure of prosocial values to be transmitted

between generations, the value of caring neighbors, the value of hard work, values based on pride of place, and a clash between prosocial and subcultural conflict resolution strategies.

These values were experienced predominately in the Keeping It Real subculture, the topic of chapter seven. Separated into five subthemes, it explores: life on the streets of Hollygrove, subcultural rules, status, and the processes of either succumbing to, or resisting the pull of the subculture. Throughout this chapter the clash between prosocial and subcultural values is described as a process of living in a bi-cultural world, and the challenges this presents for younger Hollygrove residents. Comparison is made to newly arriving immigrants struggling between the values of dominant American society and the values of their homeland.

Closely related to and deeply rooted in the subculture is the illicit economy, the subject of chapter eight. Residents strongly connected the sale of drugs to the violence in the community, understanding the illicit economy to be the primary driver of neighborhood homicide. This chapter explores four subthemes: the interrelationship between drugs and violence, the connection between alcoholic beverage outlets and violence, economic considerations of the illicit economy, and the struggle between the neighborhood and the police as part of the war on drugs in the community.

Chapter nine addresses residents' perceptions of outsiders as agents of either community destruction or community improvement. When neighborhood mistrust and cynicism was highest the residents took a decidedly negative approach toward outsiders, seeing them as the source of most of the neighborhood's ills. A second subtheme explores resistance to outside influences, including agents of positive change. This chapter proved important in the study's conclusion that neighborhood boundary maintenance helps explain conditions of high or low homicide.

The final findings chapter explores resident thinking regarding solutions to neighborhood-level homicide. Many of the homicide reduction strategies implemented by the City of New Orleans began as best practices elsewhere. Yet local knowledge of neighborhood conditions suggests that those closest to the problem may have the best potential solution to violence in their neighborhood. The solutions proposed fell into five categories: community-based strategies, educational strategies, formal control strategies, quality of life strategies, and economic strategies. Many were innovative and addressed the neighborhood's physical, social, and economic infrastructure.

The discussion chapter begins by summarizing themes and subthemes that emerged from the data. Next it situates the findings of the study amidst the social-structural literature. Third, the constructs of neighborhood values, structure and boundary porosity are linked to collective efficacy and conditions of high- and low-homicide in the neighborhood. Finally, the implications of the study are addressed as are avenues for future research.

The conclusion chapter connects the findings to the questions that drove the research. Then the chapter turns to policy and practice implications, making connections between the solutions to homicide proposed by neighborhood residents and those proposed by prominent social structural researchers. While some of the resident solutions closely reflected those emerging from existing research, others did not and provide promising new directions for neighborhood-level homicide intervention strategies. The chapter concludes with recommendations for policies and practices for homicide reduction at the neighborhood level.

Chapter 2

Theories of Criminality

A good place to begin understanding why murders occur in certain neighborhoods would be a review of criminological theories. Since the Enlightenment numerous theories as to the etiology of crime have arisen. For the most part these theories fell into two camps: those that were focused upon the individual or the personal motivation to act in criminal fashion and those that focused on environmental factors creating conditions within which crime was more likely to occur. This section will briefly address theories explaining violence by focusing on the individual before exploring social-structural theories that better inform the current study's research questions and purpose.

Enlightenment criminologists sought to explain criminal choices through the lens of individual self-interest. Cesare Beccaria, whose *On Crimes and Punishment* (1764) was deeply grounded in the thinking of the Hobbesian Social Contract, proposed that people act in ways to

maximize pleasure and minimize pain. Jeremy Bentham's *Introductions to the Principles of Morals and Legislations* (1789) advanced a "felicity calculus" in which humans weigh the pleasure of behavioral choices against the potential pain that might accompany such choices. For both men crime was a conscious decision based upon a deliberate calculation. Both concluded that deterrence of crime would require punishment that was swift, certain and severe, but also just and humane, fitting the nature of the crime but also strong enough to avert most from making criminal choices. This represented a significant movement from the thinking of the Dark Ages where punishment was seen as torture which was considered to cleanse the soul and was often far more severe than the crime. The era's theorized social contract, however, assumed that all rational humans fundamentally agree upon what is right and wrong, something generally considered utopian today. Furthermore, the notion that swift, certain and severe punishment would deter crime is belied by both lifetime criminals and the chronic recidivism that is a byproduct of the prison system.

The burgeoning scientific method would mark a positivist turn for criminology at the beginning of the 19th century. Franz Joseph Gall proposed a theory of phrenology, wherein which he postulated that the size and shape of one's skull could lead to a better understanding of the brain and therefore could help predict who might be more prone to criminal behavior (van Whyte, 2002). The newly emerging field of evolution, spearheaded by Charles Darwin, led some to propose that crime might be due to humans who had not developed sufficiently and thus were more prone to behave like primitive savages or barbarians, acting upon basic instincts and urges. Cesare Lombroso, in 1876 concluded that some may be atavistic criminals or primitive humans who had degenerated to an earlier state and were more prone to base behaviors in violation of socially accepted norms (Wolfgang, 1961). These thinkers thought a criminal

predisposition was inborn and highly individualistic, leading them to conclude that the scientific method had potential to explain why certain individuals engaged in criminal behavior.

Another twist in the positivist turn would signal the beginning of the demarcation between individual explanations for criminal offending and a new focus on social factors that could explain why crime occurred. Quetelet and Guerry, who wrote in the early 1800s, observed correlations between crime and social factors and attempted to connect economic inequities and crime causation (Bohm & Vogel, 2011). Their ability to show statistically that crime rates remain stable established that crime might be situated in social structures rather than in the choices of individuals as was the prevailing understanding. Durkheim also theorized that crime may have roots in social conditions. As societies made the transition from mechanical to organic, from rural to urban, and from collective cohesion to personal isolation, a breakdown in socially accepted values may occur, leading to anomie, moral uncertainty and lawlessness (Winters, Glokobar & Roberson, 2014). At the close of the 19th century the Chicago School sociologists began to expand Durkheim's thinking regarding the breakdown of social organization in some urban neighborhoods. They proposed that in transitional neighborhoods, ones where high poverty, ethnic heterogeneity and social disorganization were prevalent, there would be a concomitant elevation of crime (Park, Burgess & McKenzie, 1925). Thus the beginning of sociological criminology would take root and form the basis of the divergence between agency-based explanations and those that are structural in nature.

Agency-Focused Theories

In one theoretical camp lay those theories that attempted to explain criminality and violence as a product of an individual's learning, psychopathology, development, choices, or

evolutionary adaptation. Behavioral and social learning theories concluded that individual

psychology was shaped by environmental reinforcers that rewarded deviant behavior. Bandura

(1973) understood aggression to be learned via modeling, reinforced by satisfying outcomes, and

reinforced via practice. Psychopathology approaches contended that some individuals were

psychologically flawed and their deviant choices stemmed from internal conditions predisposing

them to act in criminal fashion. Rowe, Oswood & Nicewander (1990) proposed a Latent Trait

Model that explained criminal behavior as a function of inborn, internal conditions and early

environmental influences creating a propensity toward criminality. Samenow (2014) concluded

that violence was inborn and emerged throughout the lifespan as a character defect.

Developmental theorists pointed to truncation or delays in the psychosocial or moral

development that predisposed one to act in deviant fashion. Thornberry, Lizotte, Krohn,

Farnworth & Jang (1991) observed that an individual's acceptance of norms, values orientation,

and attachment to institutions such as family or school determined subsequent delinquency.

Catalano & Hawkins (1996) developed a social development model where children's ability to

develop prosocial bonds determined whether they would choose a pro- or antisocial pathway and

thus engage in later criminal behavior. The Age-Graded theory of Samson & Laub (1995)

connected criminal choices to weakened social controls, lack of individual social capital, and

structural disadvantaged which mitigated the individual choice to engage in criminal behavior.

Rational choice theorists contended that crime was a conscious decision made after an evaluation

of the potential rewards versus the consequences (Cornish & Clark, 1986). Evolutionary

psychology considered deviance to serve an adaptive or functional purpose (Daly & Wilson,

1999). These theories situated responsibility for criminal choices upon the individual and thus

sought to understand what happened to individual to prompt behavior that violated social norms.

Although these models were helpful for understanding the pathways to criminality, their ability to explain neighborhood factors leading to homicide had limited applicability to this study's purpose. Human learning and development occur in a context and not in isolation. Whether an individual makes a conscious choice to be delinquent or is driven by inner conditions, deviancy can only be defined in juxtaposition to society, its norms, its laws and the conditions under which people make decisions. The individually-based theories were tautological in nature; many criminals do have underlying deficits and this may partially explain their choices but at the same time many psychologically flawed individuals choose not to commit crimes. While criminal behavior may indeed be a conscious choice, choices are a means to an end, an end which can only be defined in the context of larger social structures. One does not choose to steal, or have stealing behaviors reinforced, or differentially associate with other robbers unless stealing helps one to achieve a desirable end, something defined by the culture to be desirable. Furthermore, if legitimate means to attainment were possible the need for illegal means would not be necessary. Finally, what is legal and illegal and who gets convicted is a matter of both power and definition; the agency-based theories neglected to account for the fact that those defined as criminals and those that are not may be a matter of structural conditions. Those with less social capital experience diminished ability to participate as equals in the making and enforcing of laws. With these challenges in mind the study focuses instead on social-structural criminological theories which better inform the current research.

Social-Structural Focused Theories

As noted previously, in the 19th century a shift in the understanding of crime causation began to occur. Quetelet and Guerry separately noted connections between social conditions and

crime statistics leading them to both question individual will as the sole causative factor and to explore the interconnection between poverty and crime (Bohm & Vogel, 2011). Beirne (1987) contended "by suggesting that crime was subject to causal laws of the order found in the natural sciences and by implying that criminal behavior was a much a product of society as of volition, Quetelet also opened up the possibility of a sociological analysis of crime" (p. 1166). Upon this foundation Durkheim (2000) began to view the Industrial Revolution's impact upon a primarily rural and agrarian society as it modernized from a mechanical society with largely shared values to an organic society with diverse, and sometimes competing values. The breakdown of these shared values, to which he referred as the collective conscience, resulted in anomie or the pursuit of individualism to the detriment of the greater societal good. Given the widely divergent values in heterogeneous societies crime was both normal and expected, and served three beneficial functions: establishing the outer boundary limits of morality, organizing a citizenry to address criminal behavior, and paving the way for social change. Ultimately this divergence from agency-based theories of criminality would pave the way for the social-structural theories to be explored in this section. These include Anomie/Strain Theory, Social Disorganization Theory and Subcultural Theories.

Anomie Theory had its roots in the sociology developed by Durkheim (2004) who proposed that humans internalized cultural values, or social facts, which he defined as "every way of acting, fixed or not, capable of exercising on the individual an external constraint; or again, every way of acting which is general throughout a given society, while at the same time existing in its own right independent of its individual manifestations" (p. 91). These were internalized via enculturation which happened through education and socialization and gave rise to a collective conscience. However, as society became increasingly more complex and

specialized, society's collective exerted less influence upon individuals who, feeling disconnected, pursued individual goals sometimes in defiance of societal constraints. This disconnection was termed anomie, or a sense of normlessness, which gave rise to deviant behavior.

Merton (1938) was the first criminologist to apply Durkheim's anomie to the study of criminology. He posited two elements of social structure that were operative, separate but working in tandem. The first consisted of culturally defined goals, purposes and interests. The second was constituted of institutional structures that defined, regulated, and controlled the acceptable means of meeting these goals. As long as there was balance between the two, social relations tended to be harmonious. At times, however, one of two poles created tension, one being ritualistic adherence to institutionally prescribed goals and the other being a stress upon cultural goal realization without regard for institutional regulation. When a segment of the population was barred from achieving the culturally important goals, anomie resulted. In U.S. society financial success was a highly valued goal, yet inequalities in institutional structures prevented a significant portion of the population from achieving their economic ends. The result, according to Merton was "countermores and antisocial behavior" (p. 674) acting in rebellion against the institutions of social control.

Not all responses in reaction to societal restrictions of goal attainment were criminal, however. Thus Dubin (1959) elaborated by adding to Merton's institutional means the concept of institutional norms, which he defined as "the boundaries between *pre*scribed behaviors and *pro*scribed behaviors in a particular institutional setting" while proposing that institutional means were "the specific behaviors, prescribed or potential, that lie within the limits established by institutional norms" (p. 149). The importance of this distinction allowed Dubin to differentiate

between whether it was the cultural goals being rejected, the institutional norms, or the behavioral pathway to achievement. Dubin's restatement served to normalize some behaviors that Merton considered deviant, rather they were adaptations to institutionally prescribed norms.

Another important clarification noted that anomie was not monolithic; different perceptions of anomie would inevitably lead to a variety of personal reactions to similar stimuli. This led Agnew (2001) to further nuance the theory by concluding there were objective and subjective experiences of anomie. Objective strains "refer to events or conditions that are disliked by most members of a given group" (p. 320) while subjective strains "refer to events or conditions that are disliked by the people who are experiencing (or have experienced) them" (p. 321). Objective strains resulted in subjective strain and involved "goal blockage, the loss of positive stimuli and/or the presentation of negative stimuli" (p. 323). The characteristics of strain that were most likely to result in crime were those that were: seen as unjust (voluntary and intentional violation of social norms), seen as high in magnitude (sufficiently severe as to prompt criminal coping), associated with low social control (therefore reducing the cost of crime) and prone to create pressure or incentive to engage in criminal coping. The types of strain strongly related to crime, according to Agnew, included: failure to achieve core goals that were not the result of conventional socialization and were easily achieved via crime; parental rejection; supervision/discipline that was strict, erratic, excessive and/or harsh; child neglect and abuse; negative secondary school experiences; work in the secondary labor market; homelessness (especially youth homelessness); abusive peer relations, especially among youth; criminal victimization; and experiences with prejudice and discrimination based upon ascribed characteristics such as race/ethnicity.

Anomie theory was especially helpful in explaining criminal behavior when understood in the context of the market-based economy. Unequal economic development in an urban context led to a variety of social ills that created the conditions conducive to deviant behavior, something Messner and Rosenfeld (1997) have termed Institutional Anomie Theory. Institutional structures that restricted economic goal attainment by preventing participation in the formal economy resulted in goal attainment in ways that were not socially sanctioned and were thus considered illicit.

The post-industrial, globalized economy led to chronic unemployment in central cities which precipitated participation in the underground economy (Venkatesh, 2006). The institutional racism that created the ghetto, contended Wilson (1997), had been supplanted by institutional structures barring inner city residents from participation in the marketplace. The resultant anomie of those who could no longer participate in the marketplace was theorized to be related to the higher rates of crime occurring in those communities.

Anomie/Strain Theory has tremendous potential to explain crime in underprivileged urban communities. Institutional racism and the consequent economic inequalities bar participation in the marketplace, relegating a significant portion of the urban population to make drastic survival choices. This is exacerbated by institutional choices to penalize individuals for their choices rather than change the structures that have facilitated them. Thus a vicious cycle is created branding participants in the underground economy as deviant and creating more stringent barriers to participation in the institutionally sanctioned means of goal attainment.

Several challenges to Anomie/Strain theory present themselves. First, given the sheer size of the underclass in America, the theory would suggest far more widespread participation in criminal behavior to achieve desired goals. Secondly, there was an assumption that the goals of

society are uniformly desired across all social strata. Finally, the theory had difficulty

accounting for white collar crimes committed by those of the privileged class who have already

achieved the goals for which those experiencing anomie/strain are purported to be striving.

Proposing that cultural values may differ throughout society, especially between different

socioeconomic strata, the subcultural theories attempted to accomplish what anomie/strain theory

did not.

Anomie/Strain Theory's focus on subcultural desires to achieve dominant cultural goals

connected to another theoretical school, Subcultural Theories of criminality. This theoretical

orientation posited a divide between the values of the prosocial, dominant culture and

subcultures within society. Subcultural values espoused mores that deviated from the dominant

culture. They ranged from immigrant communities with a set of mores and behaviors that

reflected the culture from which they emigrated, to neighborhood values that intentionally

countered dominant values inadequately serving the population and viewed as hostile to the

subculture. Elements of subcultural theories helped to explain gaps in Anomie/Strain Theory,

especially the recognition that value systems may not be monolithic even within subcultures, and

that dominant values may not be the only set of values driving criminality.

One of the first theorists to connect subcultures and crime was Louis Wirth (1931) who

proposed that "human conduct presents a problem only when it involves a deviation from the

dominant code or the generally prevailing definition in a given culture" (pp. 485-486). While

Wirth's focus was immigrant communities, Miller (1958) addressed subculture from a class

perspective, concluding that a unique subculture arose within the lower class community, one he

noted was deeply rooted, distinctively patterned, and possessed an integrity of its own. In its

specific, subcultural context the delinquency of the underclass was a matter of definition; it was

normal and functional in the subculture while perceived as delinquent by the middle and upper classes. Miller termed these divergent values the focal concerns of lower class culture and included dealing with trouble, physical and mental toughness, street smarts, creating excitement to counter drab routine, dealing with the vagaries of fate through fortune or luck, and autonomy from those in authority who would restrict or control their lives.

Noting that homicides in Philadelphia were concentrated in black communities, Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967) sought to explain this by proposing a culture of violence running counter to dominant cultural values in these communities. They submitted that this subculture is transmitted via social learning and differential association, and is viewed as an adaptive response to a hostile environment which in turn reframed criminal behavior and alleviated guilt. Anderson (1999) delineated the subcultural values of African American communities by describing the unique codes by which African Americans, relegated by structural racism to disadvantage, adapted to discrimination. While most lived by the values of dominant society, or codes of decency, others lived by the code of the streets which were disharmonious with decent codes, consisting of "a set of prescriptions and proscriptions, or informal rules, of behavior organized around a desperate search for respect that governs public social relations, especially violence" (p. 9). His premise was that ours was a culture in conflict, where different sets of values functioned to regulate behavior depending upon the specific arena in which we act. Related to these were Sykes and Matza's (1957) proposed Techniques of Neutralization, which they used to explain subcultural criminal value systems. They theorized that justifications and rationalizations for deviance served to mitigate feelings of having transgressed social norms. Knowing dominant values, and having internalized them to some degree, those who eventually subscribed to the code of the streets needed techniques to justify their behavior and neutralize

their guilt. These techniques included: denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of victim, condemnation of the condemners, and appeal to higher loyalties. While this school of thought was helpful to explain the rationale behind crime, it did not discriminate between those who were raised in the same neighborhood but chose a different life path. It did, however, help to explain the thinking that preceded criminal activity and participation in the illicit part of the informal economy.

Values were transmitted through intimate peer groups. They served to demonstrate which behaviors were valued and which were irrelevant. Deviance happened when subcultural values were at odds with dominant values. As the dominant cultural values had the power of institutions behind them they could serve to marginalize the subculture's values and thus conflict arose.

Cultural values were learned through interactions with others, concluded Sutherland and Cressy (1974), whose view drew upon interactionism and social learning theory. Through differential association individuals learned criminal codes via interaction with others in a manner similar to any other learning. Both criminal and noncriminal behavior were expressions of the same needs and values, but learned criminal methods provided an alternative path to meeting those needs, especially in an environment where law-breaking was seen as a favorable alternative to self-fulfillment. Thus learned subcultural values may express themselves in behaviors considered deviant by the dominant culture.

Cultural conflict theory posited that deviance may be a normal political process of inter-group struggle for dominance (Keel, 2005). Sellin (1938) concluded crime causation resulted from "a conflict of conduct norms" which occurred as "a result of contact between norms drawn from different cultural systems" and was a "process of group differentiation within a cultural

system" (p. 98). Dahrendorf (1959) added that conflicts arose between the dominant cultural group and subcultural groups who organized themselves into conflicting factions along group interests which led to systemic change. Agnew (2011) noted that criminal law reflected, in part, the interests and values of dominant groups who controlled legislation. This intimated that "those behaviors that threaten the interests and value of dominant groups tend to be criminalized, while other harmful behaviors are less likely to be criminalized, particularly if they are committed by members of powerful groups" (p. 16). Thus, according to the conflict theorists, when a subcultural group acted in defiance of the dominant group conflict occurred; this was defined as deviant or criminal.

Social constructionists argued that reality was objective and external to individuals while also being continuously created and recreated by society (Berger and Luckman, 1967). Thus, what was "criminal" changed across time, space and cultures and "is a classification of behavior defined by individuals with the power and authority to make laws that identify some behavior as offensive and render its perpetrators subject to punishment" (Henry, 2009). Therefore, as Hester and Eglin (1992) proposed, from a social constructionist viewpoint crime was a social construction. Those who control the construction of cultural definitions, i.e. the media (Rhineberger-Dunn, 2013) were disproportionately able to define which cultural values were acceptable and which were not. Those with less power found themselves outside of the nexus of control of these definitions and tended to be inordinately labelled as deviant.

Rose and McLain (1990) attempted to bridge the culturalist-structuralist divide with their "subculture of materialist aggression" view. They contended that "one of the primary, negative externalities associated with the spread of post-industrialism is the heightened risk of violent victimization" (p. 241). With Anderson (1999) and Wilson (1997) they proposed a link between

a group's inability to participate in the legally-sanctioned marketplace and the rise of subcultural values rejecting the dominant culture. Sampson and Wilson (2005) echoed this sentiment by positing "in structurally disorganized slum communities it appears that a system of values emerges in which crime, disorder and drug use are less than fervently condemned and hence expected as part of everyday life" (p. 185). These authors appeared to agree that the rise of, and participation in, the underground economy reflected a set of values labelled deviant, but which were necessary to survival in an inequitable society.

Summarizing the subcultural theorists Covington (2003, pp. 270-271) found four key themes emerging from the literature. The first was The Self-Hating Black Male as described by Poussaint (1983), where the twin forces of institutional racism and negative images of blackness led to rage and self-hatred which was projected onto others, lowered the threshold for violence, and was manifested in black-on-black crime. The second, The Brittley Defensive Black Male, was proposed by Curtis (1975) who attempted to use the macrosocial forces of slavery, the southern violence subculture, limited access to masculine roles via gainful employment, and ghetto overcrowding to explain the genesis of a contraculture thought to explain racial differences in violent crime. A third was Oliver's (1994) The Compulsively Masculine Black Male who, because of slavery, limited access to masculine roles, and unemployment responded with violence due to compulsive masculinity and perceived threats to personal autonomy. The fourth theme was The Angrily Aggressive Black Male, who Bernard (1990) concluded engaged in black-on-black violence due to a subculture of angry aggression brought about by the forces of urban life, low social position, and racial discrimination resulting in heightened physiological arousal and transfer of anger toward whites onto other blacks. Covington noted that these subcultural themes had been widely embraced in society and thus concluded with this warning

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about subcultural stereotypes: "The fact that the image of black males, depicted in these theories, are already so widely accepted may explain why there has been so little outrage expressed over recent increases in the number of black males placed under criminal justice supervision" (p. 279).

Like Anomie/Strain Theory, subcultural theories have limitations. While there are higher rates of violence in poor, black communities, the vast majority of males living there do not choose to engage in violent, criminal behavior. The danger of these theories is the potential they have to reify widely held notions that conflate race or minority status with crime, leading to the assumption that living in an urban, ghetto community necessarily means adopting violent subcultural values. There is also an implicit assumption of a monolithic black community, something Eugene Robinson (2010) has adeptly dispelled by purporting four black Americas with distinctly different values and viewpoints about their place in society. Also, as Covington (2003) concluded, there is a deterministic bent implicit in subcultural theories, implying that one's geographical place in the urban environment determines both one's cultural values and therefore one's life chances. However African Americans have always been able to negotiated two worlds, a theory forwarded as early as 1903 when W.E.B. Du Bois theorized the two consciousnesses in *The Souls of Black Folks*, and more recently by Elijah Anderson (1999) as he described the ability of many in the ghetto to successfully traverse both decent and street values. Subcultural theories may explain why micro-societies emerge and are sustained within the broader culture but their ability to fully explain criminal behavior is limited; a subcultural system that did not tolerate crime, for example African American communities in the River Parishes that don't share New Orleans' high homicide rates, mark the limits of the subcultural theoretical

perspective to explain crime. This is an example of social organization or collective efficacy,

something better explained by Social Disorganization Theory.

In 1925, Park, Burgess and McKenzie published *The City* and began an enduring

dialogue as to the causes of crime. They theorized that population declines in central cities

resulted in a loss of social structures and cohesiveness, a key factor in social unrest. They

concluded that crime and delinquency resulted, stemming from the failure of families and key

social organizations to function effectively in ways that maintained and enforced community

values.

Fifteen years later Shaw and McKay (1942) wrote "rates of delinquents reflect the

effectiveness of the operation of processes through which socialization takes place and the

problems of life are encountered and dealt with. Low rates of delinquents reflect the existence of

stable institutional structure" (pp. 383-384). Mapping juvenile crime, Shaw and McKay

discovered that socially disorganized neighborhoods, those in the transition zone between the

cities industrial center and the bedroom community for blue collar workers, had the highest rates

of delinquency. They inferred from this that the informal controls exerted by an engaged

citizenry were failing to operate in the transition zone. They understood this to be caused by

residential transiency, fewer opportunities for prosocial community engagement and legitimate

employment, and failure to assume conventional values. They concluded that the neighborhood

or community was the most appropriate unit for intervention, proposing that a united community

acting in concert to re-assert social controls would improve community life and keep crime in

check.

Building upon his predecessors, Faris (1955) theorized that healthy communities were

ones that extended strong social controls. When these falter crime resulted. He asserted that

"the 'crime problem' is primarily a phenomenon of urban disorganization" (p. 198).

Furthermore, as social disorganization led to crime, crime produced further social

disorganization, creating a vicious, downward spiral.

What made neighborhoods safe, according to Jacobs (1961), was eyes on the street.

When a neighborhood was alive and connected, thus organized, residents made eye contact,

observed what is happening around them, and kept criminal behavior in check. The converse, a

neighborhood in decline, was marked by residents who either were afraid to see what was

happening around them, fearing retaliation, or who chose to ignore the decaying cohesiveness

that delineated a safe community. The declining concern for the community also precipitated the

decay of the built environment. A decaying community was one that signaled an environment

where crime could occur (Newman 1973). The opposite, a community comprised of well-

maintained homes and manicured lots, sent an altogether different message. Both realities, eyes

on the street and the quality of the built environment, were interconnected components of Social

Disorganization Theory.

As social controls decreased and communities became less organized, physical

deterioration resulted, giving visible evidence of social disorganization. Kelling and Wilson

(1982) understood the physical decay of a disorganized community to send visual signals which

tended to stimulate more criminal activity in what they called a developmental sequence.

Evidence of community decay via neglect was interpreted by those observing the community as

a lack of concern by residents, marking the neighborhood as one where criminals felt safe and

law enforcement officers felt unwanted. Thus Faris' downward spiral was extended to include

the physical concomitants of social disorganization.

Social disorganization was thought to be most prevalent in central city communities with high levels of poverty and fewer opportunities. Rose and McClain (1990) tracked the economic changes facing these communities as the urban economy transformed from industrial to post-industrial. As those with skills left for better opportunity, homogenization occurred, resulting in "a congestion of households composed of individuals who demonstrate a willingness to prey upon others as a survival strategy" (p. 241). Venkatesh (2006) described this world in detail, noting that the underground economy operated according to a street code that was both violent and predatory and could be maintained because the residents of the community either feared facing retribution or benefitted from the illicit activity. In the absence of economic opportunity, these at-risk communities prohibited residents from achieving economic stability and social mobility, reifying the necessity of the underground economy and diminishing social controls.

Weak communities, those often considered dangerous by those living outside the community, failed to exert what Sampson (2012) defined as collective efficacy or "social cohesion combined with shared expectations for social control" (p. 27). Communities with limited resources lacked the capacity to exert such social controls partially because of a sense of abandonment by politicians and law enforcement and reacted to deteriorating conditions with resignation. Wilson (2012) concluded that deeply impoverished communities disproportionately suffered the effects of concentrated poverty which gave rise to social isolation, or a lack of collective efficacy. Both considered macroeconomic conditions to exert uneven effects across a metropolitan area, where harder hit areas experienced an ongoing exodus of the middle class and left behind what Wilson termed the ghetto underclass. According to Sampson these effects were enduring and resistant to change. Thus, a lack of collective efficacy tended to breed further

social disorganization which, unless dramatic steps were taken, had the potential to become a permanent feature of the community.

When communities exerted their collective efficacy, on the other hand, acting collectively to exert informal social controls, Social Disorganization Theory postulated that crime would diminish. The SafeGrowth model espoused by Saville (2009) theorized that community residents possessed a better ability to understand their space, an intimate knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses, and a clear recognition of who belongs and who does not. This model, also known as Second Generation Crime Prevention through Environmental Design, recognized that "safe places emerge less from outside experts implementing strategies to or for neighourhoods (sic), and more from neighbours (sic) creatively planning with prevention experts, police and security" (p. 386). It focused upon a community's internal capacity to act in its own best interests and recognized that improved social cohesion, what Sampson terms Collective Efficacy, would result in lowered crime. In addition to its explanatory value, the SafeGrowth model helped bridge the gap between Social Disorganization Theory as a macrosociological theory to its application at the neighborhood level; by bolstering collective efficacy the impact of social disorganization could be ameliorated as an individual community acted to improve itself and to reverse the self-fulfilling reputation as a dangerous and disorganized community.

Summarizing the essential tenets of Social Disorganization Theory Siegel (2015) delineated five key components:

1) Community disorder evidenced by physical and infrastructure deterioration, residential instability, family disruption and transiency;

2) Community fear which is experienced via victimization, expressed through incivility, propagated via narratives of danger and maintained by withdrawal and inaction;

3) Siege mentality which begins as powerlessness, metastasizes via mistrust of authorities and may be exacerbated by either police inaction or harassment;

4) Community change, especially changes brought about by the flight of the middle class from the inner city to outer neighborhoods and suburbs, and maintained both by the constant turnaround of new residents and perceptions of the neighborhood as a dangerous place, and

5) Poverty concentration, where deep poverty marginalizes ghetto neighborhoods because a dearth of jobs assures the effects endure.

These structural factors defined communities in terms of power and place, suggesting that one's physical location increased risk factors for violent crime while simultaneously decreasing opportunities to engage in opportunities for personal and collective advancement.

Unlike anomie/strain and subcultural theories, Social Disorganization Theory was centered upon place. Because homicides in New Orleans generally occur in a few, high-risk neighborhoods the theory may explain its rootedness in specific places. As well, it has potential to inform prevention as collective efficacy and informal controls can be taught and reinforced.

Criticisms of this theory focused on definitions of disorganization, differential treatment of certain neighborhoods, conflation of disorganization and its effects, and the locus of responsibility for community disorganization. Before being resurrected by Sampson and Groves (1989) the theory underwent a long period of disfavor. The term disorganization may be partly to blame as some high crime neighborhoods were highly organized but around an illicit economy and accompanying violence. A second challenge lay within the actual crime statistics; a socially

disorganized community may not truly have higher crime but rather may receive differential treatment by law enforcement and the courts, thus giving the appearance of higher crime. Third, the historical definition of disorganization was weak, something brought about by the failure to adequately distinguish between disorganization and its effects (Bursik, 1988). Finally, there was an implied assumption that those living in socially disorganized communities cause their own plight by allowing deterioration, abiding incivility, failing to act on their own behalf, leaving when achieving success rather than fighting to improve the community, and failing to adequately prepare for the job market, factors which lent themselves to a process of blaming the victim. The forces that created the ghetto, such as loss of jobs, flight of the middle class, deteriorating schools and public policies such as redlining played a far more important role. There were also forces that maintained the ghetto, such as inadequate policing, poor schools, and a desire to maintain crime in certain communities lest it overspill the boundaries. In short Social Disorganization Theory has potential to identify elements that co-occur in high crime neighborhoods but may not be either predictive or sufficiently powerful to provide direction for prevention.

Because homicide is overrepresented in a few at-risk New Orleans neighborhoods, these social-structural approaches to understanding crime may prove more valuable to understanding the complex interplay of neighborhood and homicide than individualistic explanations of causation. Thus they will become the focus of this study. Work to date found elements of each of these theories represented in interviews with community residents. The study's focus upon neighborhood-level factors undergirding homicide as experienced by community residents lends itself well to these theoretical orientations and thus they will be used to guide the research.

Chapter 3

Research Questions

For much of recent history New Orleans had the highest murder rate in the nation. As noted earlier, these homicides occurred in some neighborhoods but not in others. Three criminological theories appeared to be especially suited to understanding neighborhood-level homicide: Anomie/Strain Theory, Subcultural Theory, and Social Disorganization Theory, each of which have unique elements that give partial, but incomplete explanations for neighborhood violence. Most often, as will be discussed in the literature review, quantitative research has been

used to study rates of violence resulting in homicide. While quantitative research has helped to explain variations in violence between neighborhoods it has limited ability to explain the factors leading to variations within an individual community.

Scott (1998) proposed two approaches to understanding local conditions. The first, which he called techne, was an approach which "is characterized by impersonal, often quantitative precision and a concern with explanation and verification" (p. 320). This type of knowledge took a bird's-eye view of the situation and brought a technocrat's global knowledge to be applied to local conditions, an approach thought by many to be higher and more scientific than the alternative. The second, which he termed metis, was practical and local, "as economical and accurate as it needs to be, no more and no less, for addressing the problem at hand" (p. 313). This knowledge reflected the learned experiences of those whose life history had been one of adaptation to a local environment in constant flux. This type, often overlooked by technocrats, often was superior because it represented "a rudimentary kind of knowledge that can be acquired only by practice and that all but defies being communicated in written or oral form apart from actual practice" (p. 315). The quantitative research done to date is more akin to techne than metis and, while valuable in scope and breadth, has missed an important element of understanding regarding what is happening with neighborhood-level violence. Such knowledge is adaptive to local conditions and may help to explain why violence occurs in neighborhoods and how residents respond to it. Residents may also have innovative solutions that have been overlooked by technocrats who lack understanding of local conditions.

The central question of the study was "What factors at the neighborhood level, from the perspective of neighbhorhood residents, contribute to the high homicide rate in New Orleans?" Rather than study homicide from an top-down perspective, one which Scott would call techne,

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this study approached the issue from the viewpoint of those whose lives were affected by homicide and by the routine violence in a socioeconomically disadvantaged community, seeking to understand the local knowledge, or metis, often overlooked in studies of homicide. Several sub-questions were explored as well:

1) Does the lived experience of residents in a high homicide community reflect existing theories or suggest new ones?

2) Will the experience and knowledge of family members who have lost loved ones to homicide reflect existing theories or suggest new ones?

3) Will the relationship between concentrated disadvantage and homicide that is reflected in the literature as a factor for homicide risk be reflected in the lived experience and local knowledge of those living in a high homicide community?

4) Will social disorganization theory, anomie theory and subcultural theories be reflected in the narratives of those who live in high homicide communities?

In short, this study attempts to bridge the gap between the predominately quantitative, macrosociological studies of social scientists and the daily, lived experience of those who cope with violence at the neighborhood level.

Literature Review

Introduction

In *The City* (1925) the pioneers of the Chicago School of Urban Sociology created a concentric circle model of urban development. Its five circles began with a central business district, followed by a transition zone of mixed slum housing and industry, a zone of blue collar residences, a zone of middle class residences, and culminated with a commuter circle which, at

that point in Chicago's history, was comprised of residences of the wealthy who could financially afford to travel into the center to work. In this model neighborhood closest to the center became contested space where concentrated disadvantage was most likely to be located, where social controls were diminished, and where crime resulted. Central city neighborhoods were the slums where new immigrants and African Americans moving northward in the industrial diaspora could afford to live. These neighborhoods developed enduring and stable reputations as being unsafe, what Sampson (2012) termed neighborhood effects. These were the economically and socially disadvantaged communities where the theorists hypothesized crime flourished and where higher rates of homicide occurred.

The criminological theories outlined in the previous section concluded that crime occurred disproportionately in some neighborhoods for three reasons. First, underclass neighborhoods had historically been segregated from middle and upper class neighborhoods and over time had developed reputations for being dangerous. Second, the underclass who were isolated in ghetto communities experienced anomie/strain; wishing to achieve societally sanctioned goals but unable to accomplish them through legitimate avenues, they found informal means to do so. Third, as a result of the isolation both geographically and materially, a subculture arose that deviated from that of the dominant class. Understanding homicide in an urban context requires studying these isolated communities. This literature review focuses on empirical studies which addressed homicide in the neighborhood context, with specific emphasis on social disorganization, anomie, and subcultural studies of homicide.

Social Disorganization Studies

The importance of Social Disorganization Theory to this study was its ability to explain crime at the neighborhood level. There were two competing schools within the larger camp competing for preeminence, one focusing upon disorder as a cause of crime and the other focused upon a neighborhood's internal organization.

The first was derived from the Broken Windows hypothesis of Kelling and Wilson (1982) which purported that disorder did not cause crime as much as "create the conditions in which crime can flourish" (Bratton and Kelling, 2006). Physical disorder was evidenced by infrastructure decay and was ongoing while social disorder reflected behavioral decay, or incivility, and was episodic (Skogan, 1990). Disorder created a negative spiral of impact: fear, a siege mentality, flight from the neighborhood of those that are able, and weakened social controls among those that remain. Weakened social controls created an environment in which criminals were free to act, further weakening social controls and creating more disorder. The implication of this hypothesis was that outside intervention was required to reduce disorder and thus prevent crime.

The second reflected the concept of Collective Efficacy (Sampson, 2012) which was defined as "social cohesion combined with shared expectations for social control" (p. 27). These theorists would agree that disorder is destabilizing, leading to neighborhood abandonment and concentrated disadvantage. They would further argue that it is the abandonment of the inner city neighborhood and the loss of informal social controls that impact crime, not disorder (Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999). In this theory the signs of disorder that were the hallmarks of Broken Windows were actually crimes (damage to property, graffiti, littering, loitering, etc.) and led to a conclusion that lack of collective efficacy was the link between neighborhoods and crime. Unlike Broken Windows, the lack of informal neighborhood social controls gave rise to

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conditions favorable to crime. While both hypotheses connected disorder and crime in structurally disadvantaged neighborhoods, the key distinction was whether disorder caused the breakdown of informal social controls or the breakdown of social controls led to disorder.

Skogan's (1990) work on disorder formed much of the backbone of the Broken Windows hypothesis. Measuring disorder through surveys and direct observation the author concluded three things: residents generally agreed about what constituted disorder and how much was present in their community, there was a direct link between disorder and crime, and disorder both directly and indirectly, via its connection to crime, created neighborhood decline. Subsequent research began to challenge the link between disorder and crime proposing that another variable may better explain both crime and disorder. Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) questioned whether disorder caused crime or actually was crime (such as graffiti or public drunkenness), the implication being that another factor prior to the disorder would better explain its presence. Kane and Cronin (2009) found that disorder arrests did not deter violent crime unless they occurred in a neighborhood with high levels of residential instability, leading them to conclude that the lack of informal social controls brought about by high levels of neighborhood turnover and not disorder was the precipitant. In their meta-analysis of the Broken Windows research to date, Braga, Welsh and Schnell (2015) found that order maintenance strategies did not generate significant crime reduction while community problem-solving approaches had, and thus they concluded that a community's ability to work cohesively may better explain neighborhood crime. St. Jean (2007) has forwarded several flaws in the Broken Windows hypothesis, including:

1) Differing interpretations of disorder of those inside the community from outsiders,

2) This middle-class bias of disorder,

3) A mistaken assumption that offenders choose to commit crimes based upon a community's visible disorder,

4) The inevitability of the sequence of disorder, crime, neighborhood decline, resident fear, neighborhood flight, criminal invasion and maximized dangerousness,

5) Failure to situate disorder within a context of race, class and gender, and

6) Failure to account for the motivations of offenders in their choices of crime locations.

While physical and social disorder were linked to crime, it would appear that another mediating factor may better explain why crime rates were higher in structurally disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Sampson and Groves (1989) groundbreaking study of Social Disorganization Theory paved the way for a resurgence of the theory after years of dormancy. They surveyed British neighborhood residents asking about willingness to supervise neighborhood teens, the number of local friendships, and level of participation in neighborhood social organizations. They concluded that "communities characterized by sparse friendship networks, unsupervised teenage peer groups, and low organizational participation had disproportionately high rates of crime and delinquency" (p. 799). Years later Lowenkamp, Cullen and Pratt (2003) would replicate the findings and conclude "the major propositions specified by social disorganization theory—that certain structural characteristics of communities affect the ability of residents to impose social control mechanisms over their members, and that the loss of such control mechanisms affects rates of crime—are supported" (p. 366). Unlike Broken Windows, this research addressed the primacy of community controls rather than increasing disorder as the important variable in explaining neighborhood crime.

In the late 1990s Sampson and his colleagues defined a new concept in the field of Social

Disorganization Theory known as collective efficacy. Up to this point the theory was predicated

upon a fuzzy notion of neighborhood control as the variable that explained why crime rates were

higher in socially and economically disadvantaged communities. In 1997 Sampson, Raudenbush

and Earls found that "the differential ability of neighborhoods to realize the common values of

residents and maintain effective social controls is a major source of neighborhood variation in

violence" (p. 918). In a study of 343 Chicago neighborhoods they were able to show that

collective efficacy had a strong, negative relationship to violence and was negatively associated

to both crime victimization and homicide. Moreover, they hypothesized that a neighborhood

with strong internal organization would also be able to attract external resources such as police

participation, implying that strong informal control was connected to enhanced ability to secure

greater formal controls.

In 1999 Sampson and Raudenbush tested whether physical disorder or social disorder

proved to have the stronger link to violent crime. They concluded that lowered collective

efficacy was more strongly connected to violent crime and that collective efficacy more

completely explained physical disorder. This was also reflected in the perceptions of

neighborhood residents who, when they perceived their neighborhood to be violent, also

perceived collective efficacy to be low (Duncan, Duncan, Okut, Strycker & Hix-Small, 2003).

Collective efficacy was impacted by homicide levels as well; when homicides in a community

increased whites moved away while blacks remained and the resultant residential instability and

concentrated disadvantage diminished the ability of those remaining to exert informal controls

(Morenoff, Sampson & Raudenbush, 2001). Collective efficacy was also shown to be negatively

associated with both intimate partner homicide rates and non-lethal partner violence especially in

neighborhoods with low tolerance for intimate partner violence (Browning, Feinberg and Dietz, 2004). Sampson (2012) summarized the research done on collective efficacy and homicide by concluding, "the greatest declines in homicide are found in neighborhoods that experience increases in collective efficacy and decreases in disadvantage" (p. 175). In a meta-analysis of criminological studies, Pratt and Cullen (2005) found that the empirical evidence strongly supported the concept of collective efficacy and showed "considerable promise in predicting levels of neighborhood crime" (p. 427). The significance of collective efficacy, therefore, was its ability to explain the means by which a neighborhood's lack of organization manifested itself in higher rates of violent crime and homicide.

One challenge to this theory was the presence of highly organized communities that were also high crime communities. The research of Venkatesh on gangs (2008) and the informal economy (2006) found that neighborhoods may in fact be organized by groups whose subcultural value systems ran counter to traditional values and thus supported criminal undertakings. Others noted that a substantial portion of neighborhood-level crime was committed by residents who were socially embedded in the community and whose removal by incarceration may create a destabilizing effect on informal controls, especially as regards the mass incarceration of black men that led to single-parent families (Rose and Clear, 1998; Alexander, 2012). Furthermore, the system of network exchange and resulting obligations served an organizing effect and increased the social capital of offenders shielding them from informal social controls, something that Browning, Feinberg and Dietz (2004) referred to as negotiated coexistence.

The corollary to this was a section of a neighborhood that experienced both low crime and low collective efficacy (St. Jean, 2007), where few places suited for crime were located. Although crime rates may be high for the neighborhood overall, parts of every neighborhood

would experience lower rates of crime as there were no strategic places there for crime to flourish. While neighborhoods were treated by macrosociological theory as complete entities, there were microcommunities within them, blocks that were both well-maintained and without crime hotspots that exhibited low collective efficacy and low crime.

A challenge of Social Disorganization Theory specific to this study is its macrosociological perspective which stemmed from an attempt to explain how structural issues in American society created the conditions in which crime could occur. The concept of collective efficacy lends itself to a smaller scale study, one that might be termed a mezzosociological view. The work of Saville (2009) has potential to bridge this gap. In an extension of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), Saville proposed a second generation CPTED model named SafeGrowth that helped neighborhood residents envision, "create and self-regulate their own safety in collaboration with service providers such as planners and police" (p. 390). This was a training model to help community residents build collective efficacy in an effort to combat neighborhood crime. Duncan et al (2003) also posited a community psychology model where collective efficacy might be adapted to multiple levels in a neighborhood, micro, mezzo and macro. Thus, while Social Disorganization has traditionally been seen as a macrosociological theory, there is potential to adapt it to the individual neighborhood context via a vehicle like SafeGrowth or community psychology.

The potential of Social Disorganization Theory for understanding neighborhood-level homicide lies within its ability to explain the connection between structural inequities and concentrated disadvantage and homicide. Its explanation of neighborhood violence as a product of poor collective action and failure to exert informal controls serves to partially explain what is

happening at the neighborhood level. At the same time the limitations suggest other explanations may be needed to create a more thorough model of community violence.

Anomie Studies

Another model that sought to explain how the inequalities of a market-based economy impacted crime in certain communities was Anomie/Strain Theory. The loss of blue-collar jobs and the suburban outmigration of the middle-class created urban neighborhoods rife with concentrated disadvantage (Wilson, 1997). Filled with the same aspirations as the middle-class but lacking in socially-sanctioned avenues for their fulfillment, the marginalized either competed for a diminishing pool of living wage jobs, compromised with a low-paying service sector job or participated in the informal economy (Bourgois and Schonberg, 2010; Venkatesh, 2006). Anomie/Strain Theory posited that crime occurred when the marginalized deviated from socially-sanctioned means of goal attainment and instead resorted to proscribed means.

Historical periods during which sweeping social changes occurred tended to have higher crime counts. Comparing crime trends in Buffalo, NY between 1854 and 1956, to historic social changes, Powell (1966) found that the period of Reconstruction and the Progressive Era had higher than average rates of crime, which he contended were rooted in existential and institutional anomie. He concluded that "when there is a near collapse of the institutional order" or "where expectations exceed the possibility of fulfillment" anomie exists and higher rates of crime were to be expected (p. 171). The structural conditions that led to deeply entrenched economic disadvantage in contemporary urban neighborhoods like Hollygrove would seem to meet both of these conditions: institutional order appears to have collapsed and aspirations for personal advancement were stymied.

Recent anomie research has focused in two areas: individual strain theory such as

Agnew's (1992) General Strain Theory (GST) and institutional anomie theory such as Messner

and Rosenfeld's (1997) Institutional Anomie Theory (IAT). In the former, Agnew attempted to

cast anomie theory into social psychology parlance, noting that strain was a negative emotional

state that resulted from three conditions caused by an external entity: prevention of achieving a

positively valued goal, removal of a positively valued stimuli, or presentation of a noxious or

negatively related stimuli. Those lacking psychological, cognitive and social capital may choose

delinquency when the benefits outweighed costs and when their social environment reinforced

delinquent behavior. This theory has received some empirical support. At-risk homeless youth

exhibited the expected connection between strains and resultant negative emotional states and

these predicted crime, especially violent crimes, property crimes and drug abuse (Baron, 2004).

Boston high school students were shown to have elevated rates of anger and hostility in response

to negative life events which played a causal role in fostering more aggressive forms of

delinquency (Aseltine, Gore and Gordon, 2000). Responses to the National Youth Survey,

which has measures for both delinquency and constructs consistent with GST, showed those who

experienced elevated strain also reported higher levels of delinquency participation (Mazarolle

and Maahs, 2000). While GST does appear to have some empirical support, the theory is biased

toward agency and is less useful for explaining neighborhood-level violence.

The Institutional Anomie Theory (IAT) of Messner and Rosenfeld (1997) posited that the

American dream had a dark underside: a cultural emphasis promoting productivity and

generating pressure to succeed at all costs, a glorification of competition that fosters personal

ambition while weakening the collective sense of community, and a preoccupation with

monetary rewards that restricts the kinds of achievement to which people aspire (p. 8). The

resultant focus upon economic success was detrimental to social institutions that once regulated norms and behavior because "under conditions of extreme competitive individualism, people actively resist institutional control" (p. 79). The result was elevated crime rates, especially homicide rates, which far outstripped those of other capitalist societies, suggesting the problem lay not in capitalism as much as in the American dream. In the disadvantaged African American community two forces worked together to foster crime, one was the assimilation of the black community into the values inherent in the American dream of financial success and the other was "the alienation of young black men from the major institutions of the larger society" (p. 81).

The research was mixed when it comes to supporting IAT. One study found that instrumental crime increased when there was a high commitment to monetary success combined with a weak commitment to legitimate means of attainment, and this was exacerbated by the lack of participation in non-economic social institutions, low educational attainment, low economic attainment, and high economic inequality (Baumer and Gustafson, 2007). Messner and Rosenfeld (1997) compared national homicide rates across 18 capitalist nations with a range of social safety nets thought to partially insulate individuals' personal well-being from market forces. They found that nations with higher degrees of decommodification of labor, or the dependence upon the market as the primary distribution mechanism for "the material resources for personal well-being" (p. 1394), had lower rates of homicide. Replicating the study, but including Eastern Europeans nations that had newly adopted market-based economies, Savolainen (2000) found that strong social safety nets moderated the effects of an uneven market economy and were associated with lower homicide rates, concluding that nations with a smaller underclass experienced less anomie and therefore less homicide. Asserting that different types of homicide may differently impact anomie, Maume and Lee (2003) explored instrumental

homicides, or "lethal violence in pursuit of some material gain" contrasted with expressive

homicides, or "those committed in the context of a lover's quarrel, or a fit of rage" (p. 1144).

They found family inequality to be a strong predictor of both types of homicide, that welfare

expenditure moderated the impact of economic inequality on both types homicide, and that non-

economic institutions played a mediating role via the impact of economic motivation upon

instrumental homicides. This suggested that IAT may explain homicides committed in the

pursuit of economic gains.

Other studies proved less convincing. Studying Russia as it made a transition from a

command economy to a market economy Sang-Weon and Pridemore (2005) found that regions

where economic conditions were worst showed higher homicide rates, that family strength and

voter turnout (measures of non-economic institutions) were negatively associated with homicide,

while education had no relationship. This led the authors to conclude only partial support for IAT

but implied that the social structures may not have had sufficient time to adapt to the rapid social

changes and thus may have lost some of their buffering capability. In a cross-national study of

IAT, Hughes, Schaible and Gibbs (2015) found homicide to occur most often in countries where

free-market principles and practices drove the economy and where core cultural commitments

were oriented toward achievement, individualism and fetishism of money but that the impact of a

market-driven economy was not more pronounced in countries with weakened non-economic

institutions. They concluded that "countries with strong structural and cultural emphases on the

economy and personal responsibility for achieving monetary success tend to experience the

highest rates of lethal violence" (pp. 117-118) and that post-materialism and favorable structural

conditions may actually buffer society from high rates of homicide. Finally, Bjerregaard and

Cochran (2008) were unable to show that either annual expenditures on social welfare or the

strength of the free-market economy in a country were significantly related to homicide but they did find that family disruption and low voter turnout (a measure of non-economic institutional strength) was directly related to higher homicide rates, as was high economic inequality, especially when coupled with a poor educational system.

The promise of anomie theory is its ability to explain the interplay between individual motivation and structural deprivation for explaining crime. In the context of this study, the goal of which is attempting to understand homicide at the neighborhood level, anomie theory may prove to have some value. This value is enhanced when coupled with the explanatory value of Social Disorganization theory and especially the concept of collective efficacy. Conditions of low collective efficacy, when coupled with conditions of high anomie, would appear to be precursors to higher homicide rates. Anomie theory also may provide a bridge between Social Disorganization theory and subcultural explanations for violence as it helps explain the structural conditions of concentrated disadvantage and the vantage point of a potential offender experiencing anomie in the context of a neighborhood where inequalities abound and a subculture develops to adapt.

Subcultural Studies

Early studies connecting urbanization and crime, especially the Chicago School of Urban Sociology, paired Social Disorganization theory with subcultural theories. Only later did these two streams diverge. In his 1931 article *Cultural Conflict and Misconduct* Wirth explored cultural deviance in a criminal context. Theorizing that law was the expression of the wishes of the dominant class he opined "when culture is homogeneous and class differences are negligible, societies without crime are possible" (p. 485). The remedy for crime was assimilation which

was thought to reduce crime as immigrants and societal outcasts began practicing a moral code more synchronous with the mores of the dominant culture. Sellin (1938) further refined this reasoning, adding that culture conflict was essentially a conflict of conduct norms which occurred as a group attempted to differentiate itself within a cultural system or area, or as the result of contact between the norms of different systems or areas. In his study of gangs Miller (1958) noted that deviance was not the result of a delinquent gang subculture but rather reflected the values of the lower class, "a long-established, distinctively patterned tradition with an integrity of its own" (p. 5). Lewis (1966) found that poor communities exhibited "disengagement from the larger society, there is a hostility to the basic institutions of what are regarded as the dominant class…[t]here is hatred of the police, mistrust of government" (p. 23). The implication was that poor communities experienced anomie and, when coupled with a low levels of internal organization, "gives the culture of poverty its marginal and anomalous quality in our highly organized society" (p. 23). This thinking helped to bridge the gap between anomie, subcultural, and social disorganization theories by explaining how subcultural values arose in conditions of anomie and neighborhood disorganization and created conditions fostering violence.

The southern subculture of violence hypothesis proposed by Hackney (1969) and Gastil (1971) hypothesized that higher rates of homicide in the south may be due to high levels of gun ownership, a predisposition to violence, and a culture of honor and retribution. This subculture was exported to the north during the African American diaspora and took root in urban communities which, according to the hypothesis, explained differential rates of violence in the south and in black, northern communities. Research quickly arose suggesting the data and conclusions were flawed (Loftin and Hill, 1974) and cast doubt upon several of the fundamental

premises (O'Connor and Lizotte, 1974). Blau and Blau (1982) studied data from the 125 largest

standard metropolitan statistical areas (SMSAs), hypothesizing that urban violence was a product

of differences in racial and socioeconomic inequalities. They found criminal violence was more

prevalent in the south (southern subculture of violence), was positively related to the proportion

of African Americans (ghetto subculture of violence) and was positively related to poverty

(subculture of poverty). However, upon controlling for socioeconomic inequality they

discovered that southern location no longer influenced rates of violence and that the connection

between percentage of blacks in a community and homicide was greatly reduced. Their

conclusion was that inequality, rather than subculture, impacted violence and that if a subculture

of violence did exist it was better explained by economic inequality. Challenging Lofton and

Hill's focus upon states as units of study, Messner (1983) used 204 SMSAs as his unit of

analysis. Unlike Blau and Blau this study found location in the south and proportion of African

Americans to have a positive effect on homicide independent of poverty. Outside of the south,

racial composition was found to have a strong correlation with homicide while in the south it did

not, leading the author to note "perhaps racial differences in value orientations toward violence

are greater in non-southern regions than in the south" (p. 1006).

There were three fundamental flaws with the research to date on the southern, black and

poverty culture explanations of violence, concluded Parker (1989); first, neither the south nor

African Americans were homogeneous in lifestyle and values, second, the pejorative indictment

of urban minorities was unfair and racist, and third, these studies ignored the role of institutional

racism that produced the conflations between violence and race. The author noted that a

subculture of violence, if one existed, would "be shared by a small enough group of individuals

that evidence of its existence would be unlikely to show up in surveys, or in macro, aggregated

studies of cities or metropolitan areas" (p. 1002) and that more innovative methodological

approaches would be required to find them.

More promising research on the subculture of violence addressed structural conditions,

implying that culture alone was not sufficient to explain violence. This research recognized that

"in structurally disorganized slum communities it appears that a system of values emerges in

which crime, disorder and drug use are less than fervently condemned and hence expected as part

of everyday life" (Sampson and Wilson, 1995, p. 50). Much of the research in this areas has

been ethnographic and has explored topics including the subculture of Puerto Rican crack dealers

in New York City (Bourgois, 2003), homeless heroin addicts (Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009),

marginalized street vendors and hustlers of New York City (Duneier, 1999), street gangs in a

high-rise Chicago housing development (Venkatesh, 2008), and the underground economy in

Chicago's south side (Venkatesh, 2006). They described life on society's margins from the

viewpoint of those experiencing structural disadvantage, capturing the challenges of living

between two cultures, their own and the dominant culture who made the rules. Thus there was a

substantial amount of qualitative and ethnographic literature affirming the subcultural

explanations of violence.

Anderson (1999) described the complex interplay between these often competing values

systems defining them as "street" values and "decent" values. His proposed code of the street "is

sanctioned primarily by violence and the threat of violent retribution" (p. 134) and became more

normative as greater numbers of urban youth adopted the code. The neighborhood was impacted

when residents were "encouraged to choose between an abstract code of justice that is disparaged

by the most dangerous people on the streets and a practical code that is geared toward survival in

the public spaces of their community" (p. 134). It was the structural inequities that gave rise to

and maintained the subcultural code of the streets and made it possible to partially explain differential rates of homicide in some communities.

In St. Louis Kubrin and Weitzer (2003) found that neighborhood disadvantage correlated strongly with retaliatory homicide and that retaliatory street killings reflected street codes. They concluded that encounters resulting in retaliatory homicides were shaped by: disrespectful or challenging exchanges, community tolerance for lowered social control, and a reluctance of the community to call police. They proposed four types of retaliatory homicides related to street culture: retribution for disrespect, insults toward female significant others, a policing vacuum, and community/family support for retaliation. Kubrin (2005) also found that street codes transcended place and were transmitted via pop culture especially prominent rap music where violence was portrayed as a vehicle for establishing social identity, respect and social control.

Violent behavior has also been shown to be an instrumental tool for developing street credibility and impressing peers (Wilkinson, 2003). Adopting street codes at an individual level has been shown to be useful as a predictor of violence for African American youth (Stewart, Simons & Conger, 2002) while also placing them at greater risk for violent victimization, especially in high-crime neighborhoods (Stewart, Schreck & Simons, 2006). There was a cyclical aspect to neighborhood violence; using violence to prove one's strength and street credibility resulted in retaliation as the offended party enacted retribution, creating a vicious cycle of dominance and victimization (Berg, Stewart, Schreck & Simons, 2012). Widespread street culture adoption by a neighborhood has been shown to predict violent delinquency and to enhance adoption of subcultural values (Stewart and Simons, 2010). These studies connected the prevalence of subcultural street codes and neighborhood violence.

There was also a connection between neighborhood social controls and subcultural values. When neighborhood residents were both strongly attached to their neighborhood and satisfied with the police they exercised more informal social controls (Silver and Miller, 2006). When trust in the police was poor, legal cynicism developed, something Kirk and Papachristos (2011) defined as "a cultural orientation in which the law and agents of its enforcement are viewed as illegitimate, unresponsive, and ill-equipped to ensure public safety" (p. 1191). The result was behavioral choices that ran counter to dominant norms. A community experiencing high levels of legal cynicism was also less likely to cooperate with the police when it came to arresting offenders for three reasons: fear of retaliation, experience with offenders being quickly released, and because those being arrested are a source of protection and/or goods in the informal economy (Kirk & Matsuda, 2011). These studies proposed that neighborhoods high in collective efficacy were less likely to adopt subcultural values oppositional to dominant norms.

While earlier thinking about subcultural theories seem to have lost both favor and momentum to explain violence in certain impoverished communities, more recent studies that have bridged the structural-culture divide have received some empirical support. Although broad, sweeping subcultural hypothesis such as the southern honor subculture of violence and the subculture of poverty may have limited value, Anderson's street codes have shown promise for to explain neighborhood violence. As noted previously, early attempts by the Chicago School of Sociology's to explain violence via social disorganization relied heavily upon cultural elements to create the theory. The divide between the two may be artificial and forced, as evidenced by the ethnographic work of Venkatesh (2006) and the theoretical partnership between Sampson and Wilson (1995). Together the two theoretical traditions may prove to better explain neighborhood violence.

A more comprehensive theoretical formulation may require the addition of anomie. The importance of social disorganization's concept of collective efficacy is its ability to explain how disadvantaged communities lose cohesion and fail to exert informal controls to curtail violence. Street codes help explain the apparent paradox of a community that fails to exercise informal controls reflecting dominant norms while embracing those counter to them. Anomie theory helps bridge the two by explaining the rejection of dominant norms by those who value culturally sanctioned goals but have limited means and hopes for their attainment. Anomie leads to a street culture running contrary to dominant cultural norms, thus eroding the power of those who would exert informal controls in ways that enhance collective efficacy.

One informant, relating a story about growing up in Hollygrove, shared how when he was younger "every mama was your mama." Caught doing something wrong one ran the risk of being disciplined more than once before reaching home. Contrasting then to present-day Hollygrove, he opined it now is "all about the money," that monetary success at all costs has become the prevalent norm. Then he described a neighborhood with deeply entrenched values, where violence erupts when people come to the neighborhood who "aren't from back here." This informant managed to connect collective efficacy, IAT and subcultural theories to explain Hollygrove's violence and homicide in a single interview.

Each of these theories has some potential to explain why homicide occurs in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Each of them has empirical support. While none of them may explain neighborhood-level homicide alone, some combination of the three may.

Chapter 4

Studying Neighborhood-Level Homicide from a Qualitative Perspective

As the literature review showed there has been extensive research done from a quantitative perspective while it was difficult to find qualitative studies of neighborhood-level homicide. Quantitative, macrosociological studies explained variations between neighborhood homicide rates, but further research was needed to explain conditions leading to homicide within individual neighborhoods. To better explain New Orleans' high homicide rate required drilling deeper into the subject matter by exploring the views of those whose lives were daily impacted by the phenomenon. Thus this study used qualitative and ethnographic methods to adapt macro theories to a mezzo (individual neighborhood) level in an effort to bridge this gap in the literature. The study attempted to connect macrosociological perspectives of violent crime to neighborhood views regarding its etiology in order to better understand homicide at the neighborhood level and thus explore how homicide might be mitigated. The study explored Social Disorganization theory's concept of collective efficacy, Institutional Anomie Theory's explanation of what motivates offenders to eschew socially-sanctioned means of monetary pursuits, and Subcultural theory's understanding of a counterculture in a neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage in an effort to apply these theories at a neighborhood level.

Understanding a phenomenon like neighborhood-level homicide in some depth requires developing a "complex, holistic picture" (Creswell, 1998, p. 15) derived from the lived experience of those whose lives have been impacted by it. Getting to this level requires gathering "information that is difficult to obtain through more quantitatively-oriented methods of data collection" (Guest, Namey, Mitchell, 2013, p.1). Qualitative research seeks to uncover the

meanings that individuals ascribe to the phenomena, requiring researchers to "rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied" (Creswell, 2014, p. 8). To better understand homicide at the neighborhood level requires a study that could bridge the gap between macro studies about neighborhood-level homicide and the lived experience of those in a high homicide neighborhood whose lives are daily being impacted. This study used a qualitative and ethnographic approach to connect the lived experience of neighborhood violence to existing theories in an effort to better understand how it occurs and what might be done to mitigate it.

Research Design

Ethnography is a qualitative research design with roots in cultural anthropology conducted in the early 20th century (Creswell, 2014). Park, Burgess and McKenzie (1925) concluded that neighborhood-level crime occurred due to the lack of cohesiveness of socially disorganized neighborhoods. Out of this research several ethnographic studies emerged to describe the phenomenon (Shaw, 1930; Cressey, 1932; Sutherland, 1937; Whyte, 1943). The importance of ethnography, according to Creswell (2014) is the focus upon a culture-sharing group even when the group is bounded and small, such as a single urban neighborhood. Using an emic perspective, or "taking on the point of view of those being studied" (Babbie, 2013, p. 301), this study followed the ethnographic tradition of telling the story of neighborhood homicide as viewed through the eyes of residents of the Hollygrove community, a New Orleans neighborhood that resembled the socially disorganized communities of Chicago studied by the urban sociologists of the early- to mid-twentieth century.

Beginning with a single homicide that occurred near one of the neighborhood's crime hotspots, the study used snowball sampling to gradually expand outwards in concentric circles

that resembled the Chicago School of Urban Sociology's concentric zones of the city. Those

closest to the murder, many of whom live in the adjacent blocks from where it occurred, formed

the second circle, viewing the homicide from a personal perspective but once-removed. Others

in the neighborhood formed the third circle, those whose lives were impacted both by the

specific homicide and other homicides that occurred throughout the neighborhood. The fourth

circle consisted of neighbors and neighborhood leaders who understood the neighborhood and

had a wider perspective on neighborhood conditions. Finally, city officials who understood the

community were interviewed, including law enforcement officers, political figures and civic

leaders to add an even broader perspective of the neighborhood.

Individual Homicide

Adjoining Block

Neighborhood Residents

Community Leaders

City Officials
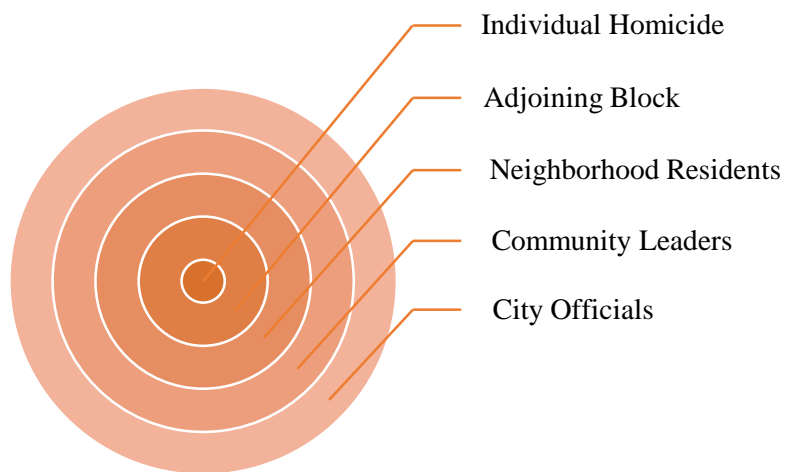
Figure 1: Concentric Circles of Interviews in Study

1 CBD (central business district)

2 Transition zone

3 Blue-collar residential

4 Middle-income residential

5 Commuter residential
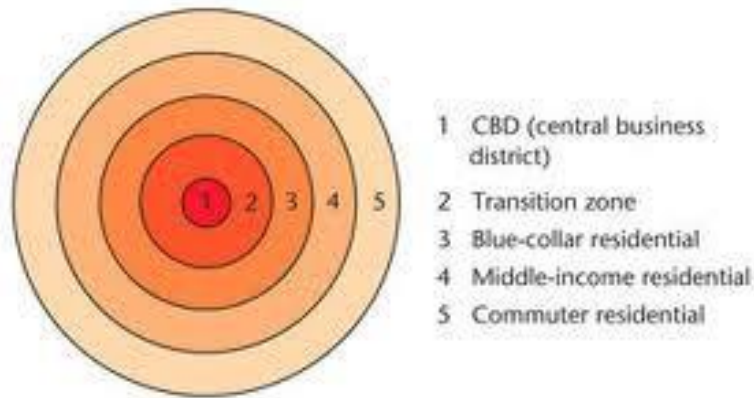
Figure 2: Social Disorganization Theory Zones.

Methods

Because a neighborhood social milieu has many elements that are visible primarily to insiders, data collection must begin there (Guest, Namey and Mitchell, 2013). To gather insider knowledge this study employed qualitative research interviewing and focus groups as a method to "understand themes of the lived daily world from the subjects' own perspective" (Saldana, 2009, p. 24). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) posited that "interviewing is an active process where interviewer and interviewee through their relationship produce knowledge" (p. 17). There were two types of data collection used in the study: individual, in-depth interviews and focus groups. All of the interviews and focus groups were semi-structured and began with a prepared set of questions but allowed for latitude to veer from scripted questions to explore emerging issues in more detail. They ranged from 45 minutes to 1.5 hours in duration. The use of focus group interviews to supplement the individual ones, according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), offered added potential to create spontaneous expression and deeper emotion through group interaction as contrasted with individual interviews which tend to be more cognitive (p. 150).

In addition to interviews and focus groups, photographs were used to help convey depth and detail. Bourgois and Schonberg (2009) pictures of homeless addicts, while Duneier (1999) used pictures of sidewalk-based street vendors in New York, to help readers connect to the ethnography and better understand their project. All of the photographs in the study were taken by the researcher. None of the photographs identify study participants in order to protect their anonymity.

The final research method was crime scene observation. Creswell (2013) noted that the advantage of observation is the ability of the observer to use all five senses to collect data. The researcher observed an investigation of a shooting, spoke to neighborhood residents present when the shooting occurred, and discussed the scene with police detectives who were treating the scene as a homicide investigation because they expected the victim to die from his wounds. Observation also included visiting scenes of previous shootings where makeshift memorials to deceased victims had been erected. Observation of an active investigation provided greater depth of understanding of the process police used, allowed the researcher to better understand the interaction between the police and the neighborhood members who were bystanders at the time of the shooting. It also presented a unique, intimate experience with the family members who lived nearby and to whose home the victim ran and collapsed after the shooting. Finally, this observation offered perspective regarding how control of space changed hands when crime scene tape was used to limit the ability of local residents to enter the two-block stretch where the shooting was being investigated.

Snowball sampling was employed to identify potential informants. Babbie (2013) defines snowball sampling as "a process of accumulation as each located subject suggests other subjects" (p. 191). He cautions that the procedure results in samples with questionable

representativeness and notes that it is best utilized for exploratory purposes. While this study explored the lived experience of neighborhood homicide from the perspective of those closest to it, the findings also suggest explanations regarding what happens at the neighborhood level to foster conditions of either higher or lower homicide.

Data

At the core of the study were 25 in-depth, semi-structured interviews that began with a single murder near a neighborhood crime hotspot, a corner where several murders have taken place, including that of Brandon Aggison. The interviews then expanded outward to secure the perspectives of residents throughout the neighborhood. Neighborhood interviewees ranged in age from a male in his early 20's, to senior citizens who had lived in the neighborhood for many years. To provide broader perspective, several interviews were conducted with non-residents, including two high-ranking police officials, two political appointees of the Mayor, and the neighborhood's city councilperson. Three resident focus groups were conducted: the first with a group of three male males in their early 20s, a second with a group of seven neighborhood senior citizens, and a third with a group of six community leaders actively engaged in community development. With the exception of three participants in the community leaders focus group, all resident voices were African American. Seventeen photographs of the community were included to add depth and perspective on the data. These included three crime scene pictures taken to show both an active investigation of a shooting and a makeshift memorial to a homicide victim as well as pictures of the neighborhood to better illustrate the neighborhood's physical space and to add depth to the written description of the community.

The initial interview took place with the surviving family member of a homicide victim, a widow in her mid-20s whose common-law husband was shot and killed leaving her to raise their 5-year-old son as a single mother. She was a classmate of Brandon Aggison, currently resided one half block from the corner where he was killed, and was also raised in a home across the street from the corner store where he was shot. The researcher's existing work in the community brought him into contact with many acquaintances who lived within a block or two of that corner and those residents formed a second circle of interviewees. Suggestions by these interviewees led to another circle of resident interviews representing those who lived farther from the corner of Brandon Aggison's shooting and which provided a fuller perspective of the neighborhood. The researcher's connections to multiple community leaders with a deep knowledge of the neighborhood provided a final set of interviews.

Table 3: Race, Gender, and Age of Study Participants

	Race		Gender		Age				
	Black	White	Male	Female	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Individual Interviews	88%	12%	68%	32%	20%	20%	20%	24%	16%
Focus Groups	81%	19%	31%	69%	25%	13%	6%	6%	50%

Validity and Reliability

Creswell (2014) concluded that validity in qualitative research required checking for the accuracy of the data, and posited eight primary strategies to assure valid data. This study used three. First, data was triangulated through the use of multiple sources that were converged to build valid themes. Data sources included interviews with both residents and outsiders with a stake in the community, statistical data from multiple sources, and participant observations in

multiple settings and at varied times. Second, the data gathered was checked by informants by allowing them to read transcripts of their interviews. This occasionally involved calling or meeting with interviewees to verify or add further information to their statements. Finally, because this was a dissertation, there was oversight of the study at every stage by the committee, assuring a deep level of accountability and regular auditing of the data, findings, and conclusions.

Creswell (2013) found that reliability could be assured by taking detailed field notes, by using a high-quality recording device, by transcribing the interviews carefully and in a manner that reveals conversational pauses and overlaps. He also stressed checking transcriptions to assure there were no obvious transcription errors and avoiding coding drift by creating memos defining codes and the process by which they are used (Creswell, 2014).   Throughout each interview and observation, the researcher maintained detailed notes. Interviews and focus groups were recorded using an Olympus WS-802 digital voice recorder. Verbatim transcriptions were completed by the researcher and two paid assistants; whenever there were questions about the accuracy of the transcriptions the recordings were reviewed to assure accuracy of the transcriptions. Finally, data were hand-coded in the margins of the transcription and checked against field notes to avoid coding drift and errors.

Data Analysis

All interviews and focus groups were recorded on an Olympus WS-802 digital voice recorder and transcribed verbatim by the researcher and two paid assistants. Observations of the community and crime scenes were collected in a notebook with room in the margins for later

coding or for thoughts that occurred after it was concluded. Each of the interview transcripts were printed to allow them to be hand-coded by the researcher.

Coding has been described as the process of "aggregating the text or visual data into small categories of information" (Creswell, 2013, p. 184). Saldana (2013) proposed a two-pass coding system consisting of a first set of broad codes generated during a first coding cycle, followed by a second coding cycle that narrows the number of codes as the researcher identifies similar and common codes. He suggested that the second cycle of coding should combine codes to generate themes, or broad descriptors, drawn from the codes that more fully explain the data. These themes can then be connected to the existing literature in an effort to extend existing theories or suggest new ones.

The interviews and focus groups were hand-coded using deductive, inductive and in-vivo codes (Saldana, 2013). Line-by-line coding generated a massive number of first-pass codes. A second pass found numerous similarities and allowed the researcher to see commonalities and thus reduce the number of codes. These were organized into five key themes: the community's clash of values, the Keeping It Real subculture, the connection between drugs and violence, mistrust of outsiders/neighborhood boundary issues, and grassroots solutions to neighborhood homicide. These themes were connected back to the existing literature to help contextualize the findings within existing understandings of neighborhood-level violence and homicide and to advance existing theoretical understandings of neighborhood-level homicide. Several of the in-vivo codes became chapter titles and/or section headings.

Role of the Researcher

I spent two periods of my life in the community to be studied. My family moved to Hollygrove during the summer after my 7th grade academic year and maintained a home there until my father's death 36 years later. I returned to the neighborhood after a 19-year sojourn in Chicago and began working as a community organizer and developer. Throughout the next 16 years I was privileged to be part of innovative change, much of it taking place after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. These experiences served both to deepen my ties within the neighborhood and to pique my concern for the high number of homicides among young, African-American males in the community. Some of them were friends of mine, many were acquaintances and all of them made an indelible impact upon my thinking. This is what motivated me to return to school and the reason I chose this topic and this neighborhood for my dissertation research.

My perspective was both as an insider and an outsider. While I grew up in the community and had maintained ties there all my life, I was white. Hollygrove is overwhelmingly African American. Thus I was frequently described as "the white guy." My longstanding work in the community had brought me a level of respect and access that most white males were rarely afforded. My childhood in the community provided a bi-cultural perspective that few whites ever experience. Yet, at the end of the day, I was still white and there was a divide that I would never fully cross.

Finally, my work in the community predated my academic studies at the University of New Orleans. I was first a community member and only later have I become a researcher. Thus, while I brought a unique, insider's perspective to the research, it was a perspective that necessitated careful bracketing to maintain distance from the research and to assure my personal perspective on the community did not interfere with the validity of the findings.

Chapter 5: Setting

A Trip Down Olive Street
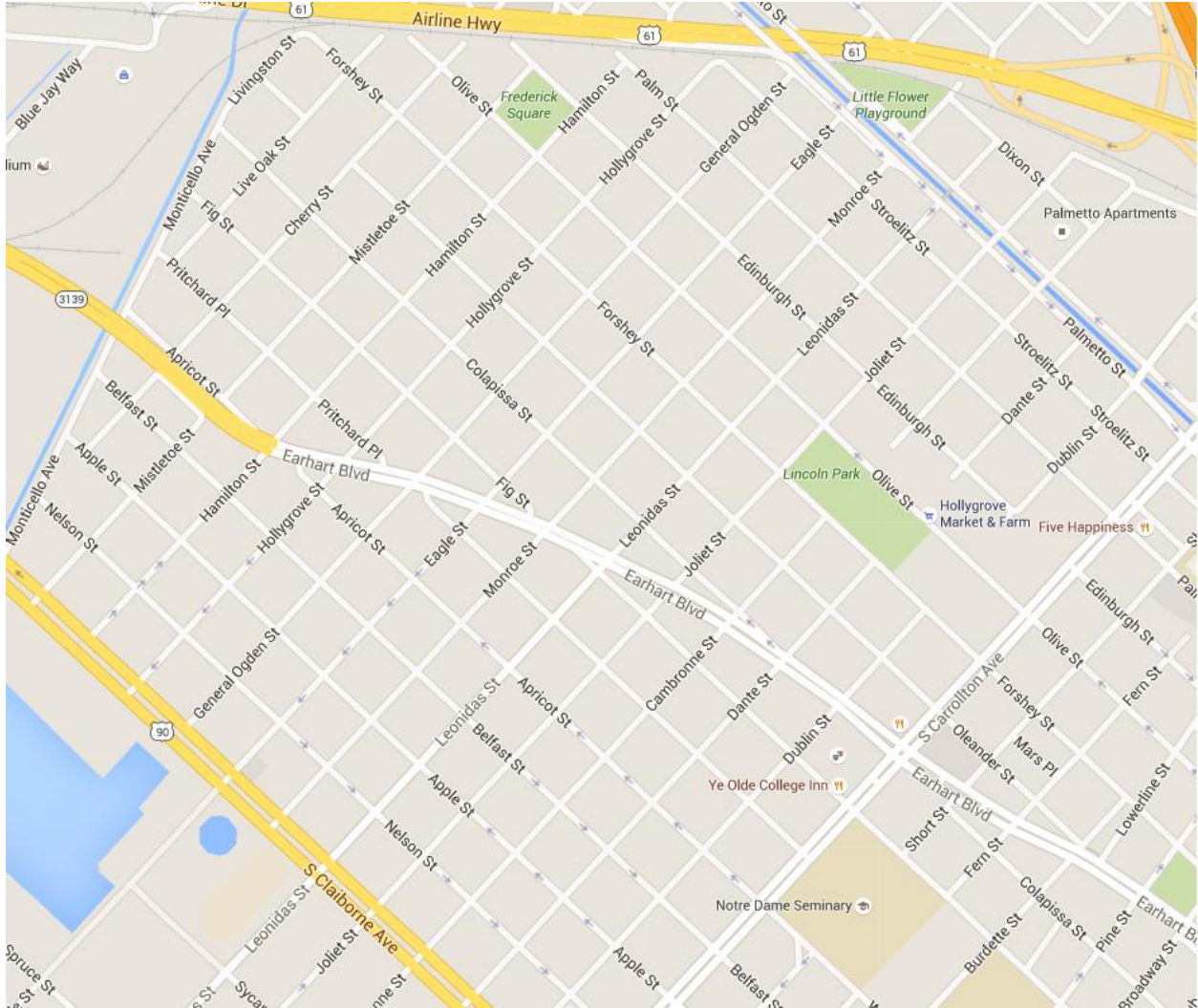
Figure 3. Google Maps (2016) Map of the Hollygrove Neighborhood.

Hollygrove's Olive Street represented the best and worst of New Orleans. A grand, inviting entrance was marked by a canopy of mature live oak trees and two magnificent buildings from a former, more opulent era of New Orleans' history. The entry concealed the disinvestment that lay beyond. The first four blocks were the domain of a white middle class

who resided elsewhere, driving into the community to use the post office, shop at a pocket farm with an attached market, and use recreational facilities. After that it suddenly changed into an inner-city neighborhood comprised of a hodgepodge of residences, many of which were abandoned, vacant lots, a corner store, a second neighborhood park and then a dead end at Airline Highway. An entire city's issues were writ large on this one street.

You enter the neighborhood from Carrollton Avenue, one of the city's major arteries, passing between the Waldo Burton Boy's home and the Carrollton Branch of the United States Postal Service. The Waldo Burton was "endowed and built in the 1920s by cypress lumber businessman and philanthropist, William L. Burton (1847-1927) who wished to establish an enduring memorial to his only child, William Waldo Burton" (Waldo Burton Memorial Boy's Home: Tulane University Special Collections). Constructed in the 1920s as an orphanage for boys it was an imposing, grand two-story structure with an expansive green front lawn, an ornate wrought iron fence, and stately Live Oak trees along the circular driveway. The property spanned one city block in width and two deep. The rear yard was equally lush but could not be observed from Olive Street due to the high, chain link fence with a privacy screen that shielded it from view.

| *Figure 4.* Front entrance of the Waldo Burton Memorial Boys Home. | *Figure 5:* Rear yard of the Waldo Burton Memorial Boys Home |

On the other side of Olive Street was the Carrollton Branch post office. Claude, in his late 80s, remembered when it was the Cloverland Dairy, "the largest dairy in the South" (Cloverland Dairy Products, Inc. website). At one point in its history it employed noted New Orleans trumpeter Louis Armstrong (Armstrong, 1993, p. 25). It would later become home to the Sealtest Dairy before becoming the post office in the 1980s. While much of the dairy was razed by the postal service, the façade remained, constructed with glazed white tiles and arched windows. Behind the post office, which extended two blocks down Olive Street, was parking for delivery vehicles and an overgrown vacant lot surrounded by a chain link fence topped with barbed wire also owned by the federal government and used by the Carrollton Playground for parking. The post office and the boys' home were magnificent structures facing the main avenue that belied the neighborhood's issues farther along the street.
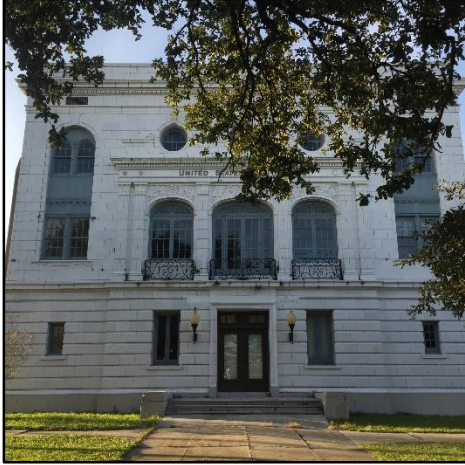
Figure 6. The Carrollton Branch of the Post Office, site of the former Cloverland Dairy.

Behind the Burton Home was the Carrollton Playground, also known as Lincoln Park. It was a series of athletic fields used primarily by the children of affluent, white families for baseball and soccer. Several residents described this as the "white park," one that was off limits to most neighborhood residents. It was operated by the Carrollton Booster Club whose leadership, with the exception of one African American, was white according to their website. There were several smaller baseball diamonds behind chain link fences, one larger ballpark complete with stands and a concession area. When the fields were being used there was a constant police presence monitoring them to maintain safety, notifying the surrounding community that they were being observed and were not welcome. While the boosters have attempted to engage the community in their programs by offering scholarships for youth to participate, those overtures had been rebuffed. Neighborhood youth noted they feel more welcome, at Conrad Playground which lay six blocks further down Olive Street.

Figure 7. The Carrollton Playground.

Figure 8. The Hollygrove Market and Farm.

Across from the playground was the Hollygrove Market and Farm (HGMF). It occupied property that was once a gardening supply store and plant nursery but was abandoned after Katrina. It was originally conceived to address two neighborhood issues: health problems related to poor diet and Hollygrove's lack of grocery stores. It was a one-acre pocket farm that both grew produce and imported it from local growers. Many came to the market from throughout the city, few from Hollygrove. HGMF had attempted to engage the community by providing discounts to local residents, cooking and nutrition classes, meeting space, and jobs for local residents. Like the ball fields across the street, however, the market served a primarily white clientele.

Next to the HMGF was Phase III Body Shop and Wrecker Service, a black-owned business whose owner told me the business had operated there for 36 years. The body shop was always busy with cars parked along Olive Street awaiting repairs. Phase III stood out in these first few blocks because it primarily served an African American clientele. Even this space was contested, however. The Booster Club worked with the city to make traffic on Olive Street

travel one way, from Carrollton Avenue into the neighborhood. The boy's home, post office, market and ball fields were continuous; there were no side streets that crossed Olive in these first four blocks. Accessing Phase III legally required traveling out of the neighborhood to Carrollton Avenue and then back into the neighborhood at Olive Street. Many residents ignored the directional signs and travelled the wrong way to get there.

Figure 9. The Phase III Body Shop.
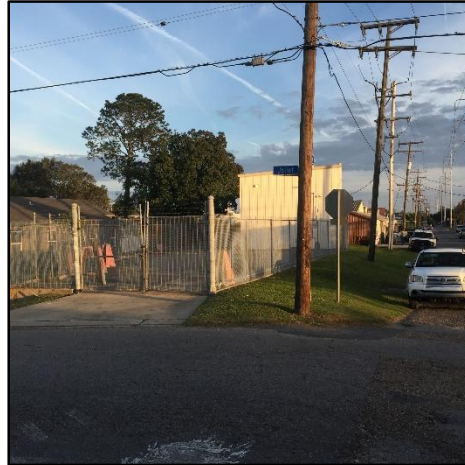
Figure 10. The Public Storage Facility adjacent to Phase III.

One final portion of the first four blocks, situated on the remnants of an old railroad that once traversed diagonally through Hollygrove, was a Public Storage facility. Owned by a Glendale, California company the facility provided storage lockers for rent. The property was enclosed with a chain-link fence topped with barbed wire. The road rose as one crosses Joliet Street, where the tracks once were elevated. Across this former track bed lay the rest of Hollygrove.

One resident of the neighborhood remembered it as a formerly mixed neighborhood comprised of working-class Italians and African Americans. Several referred to the part of Hollygrove closest to Carrollton Avenue as the white part of the neighborhood. The first four blocks of Olive Street, with the exception of Phase III, showed evidence of this racialized past.

One prominent feature marking Olive Street were the high voltage electrical lines running through the community. There were two to three of these on every block on the left side of the street. Many of them had been tagged with graffiti. There were also no curbs when one crossed Joliet Street and because Olive Street is higher than many yards this caused flooding. Curbs would direct the flow of water to the drains, without them water flows into the adjacent yards.

Figure 11. A view of Olive Street crossing the abandoned railway. The Greenline begins on the left.

Figure 12. An abandoned house across from the Greenline.

Between Joliet and Leonidas Street there were only four houses, all on the right side of the street. Two of them were currently occupied, one had been under construction since Katrina and one was abandoned, blighted and in imminent danger of collapse. Across the street, running diagonally away from Olive Street at Joliet, lay the abandoned railway and vacant land. In recent years the Sewerage and Water Board (S&WB) buried drainage pipes underneath the railway, leveling its once-raised path to street level. The S&WB ceded the first two blocks to the neighborhood for the creation of The Hollygrove Green Line. The Carrollton Hollygrove Community Development Corporation collaborated with Tulane University's City Center to develop this into a linear park, with an orchard of fruit trees and an innovative water retention

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project that drained rainwater into a large retention pond planted with native plants chosen for their ability to absorb water. The first section of the Green Line, at the corner of Joliet and Olive Street, was paved with blacktop and surrounded by a chain link fence topped with barbed wire.

The next cross street was Leonidas, where public transit bus line traversed the neighborhood. On the left sat a vacant home, a brick structure facing Leonidas that once was the family home of the Macaluso family. This Italian family, once prominent citizens of the community, owned a number of homes in the adjoining area which were mostly vacant since Katrina. Behind it a vacant land parcel stretched to the next cross street, also owned by the Macalusos. On the right are two four-plex apartment buildings, abandoned since the storm. Much of that block was vacant land as well. These buildings were two of four on that block, also owned by the Macalusos; one was once the home of Lil Wayne, a Grammy Award winning rap artist. The buildings were weathered with boarded windows, their carports consisted of steel posts as the roofs were missing. On this block the streets began to show significant disrepair with current potholes and evidence of frequent, hasty patches elsewhere. In these first two blocks there were only two occupied homes, the remainder were vacant and blighted with the exception of one that had been slowly constructed in the ten years since the storm.

Between Leonidas and Eagle Street the number of homes increased. To the right vacant lots, where blighted houses were razed, sat like parentheses at both ends of the block. Between them were four single houses, all occupied. To the left were two double shotgun houses, two single-family homes and two four-plexes, also occupied. The most notable feature of this block was the sewer lift station jutting out into the street. Above ground it is a nondescript cinder-block building about five feet square and seven feet high; below ground was a massive pump, two stories below the street, which served to move sewerage on its route to the treatment plant at

the edge of the neighborhood. For many years after Katrina a temporary pump blocked half the street, periodically leaking raw sewerage into a vacant lot and leaving a malodorous stench impacting the nearby neighbors.

Figure 13. The vacant former home of the Macaluso family.

Figure 14. Abandoned 4-plexes across from the Macaluso home.

The blocks of Olive Street between Eagle and General Ogden, then between General Ogden and Hollygrove, had been the location of multiple homicides. On the left side a Habitat for Humanity home, newly constructed, began a stretch of shotgun doubles, ending with a vacant lot where an abandoned home was once used for drug sales until the neighbors successfully petitioned the city to raze it. On the right a two-story four-plex was followed by a single home, vacant land belonging to St. Peter's A.M.E. church, two doubles, an abandoned, blighted home and then the Olive Superette. This corner was the impetus for this study, the place where Brandon Aggison was shot.

The Olive Superette was a one-story, brick structure at the corner of Olive and General Ogden, opening to Olive Street. On the sides of the building were advertisements suggesting the store was a "Fresh Meat Market," along with a widely-ignored "No Loitering" sign. Another sign, protruding from the store so it could be seen from both streets, stated "Olive Food Store &

Meat Market, Hot Food." While it did provide an array of grocery items, the bulk of its sales appeared to be alcoholic beverages and drug-related paraphernalia. Seven men were standing at the entrance of the store, most drinking; all but one walked inside the store when told I was taking a picture of the store. The street outside was littered with trash, despite the nearby trash receptacle.

While writing this chapter on setting, I received a phone call that another shooting had occurred there. Approaching the corner, I saw that the NOPD had stretched police tape across a 1-1/2 block radius of the shooting and residents were gathered outside the tape watching the police collect bullet casings. The ambulance had recently left the scene with the victim, a young African American man in his twenties. One of the men sitting outside the tape greeted me by name and told me that the victim was his nephew, a man that I knew. While no one seemed to know the aggressor, several had observed the shooting. They told me that a car stopped near the intersection, a black male got out, pulled a gun and shot the victim four times with a pistol in full view of all on the corner. This occurred around 1:30 PM, in daylight, just beyond range of the video camera on the side of the store. Many of the residents thought the shooter knew the position of the camera and intentionally avoided it.

Figure 15. The Olive Superette.

Figure 16. Crime scene memorial for Iceman.

Crime scenes are the domain of the police investigators. Sections of the neighborhood become temporarily inaccessible to locals as the police assert their authority to claim the territory. Bert, who was a participant in this study, walked over from his house inside the crime scene to tell me that his toilet had been shot and had leaked all over the bathroom floor. He asked me to come with him to see it, lifting the tape and escorting me inside. One of the detectives stopped us and ushered us back beyond the perimeter of the yellow tape, telling Bert that he was allowed inside the tape but I was not. Another detective, an acquaintance of mine, walked over to talk with me about the importance of protecting the scene. The detectives were treating it as a homicide scene believing the victim would not survive. Several of those gathered outside the tape, neighborhood residents, were angry about being restricted from crossing the tape. Because I was white and dressed in a suit it appeared that I was treated with a different level of respect than they were.
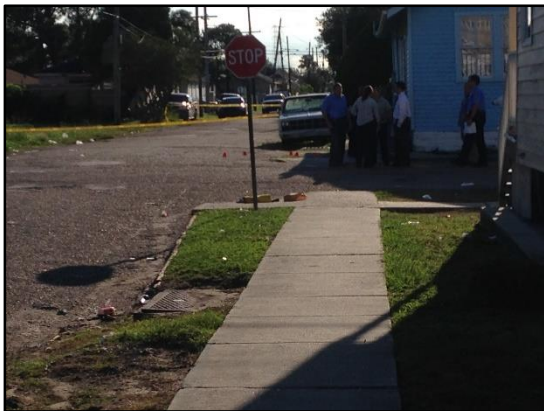
Figure 17. Detectives investigating the scene of a shooting at Olive and General Ogden, November 3, 2016.
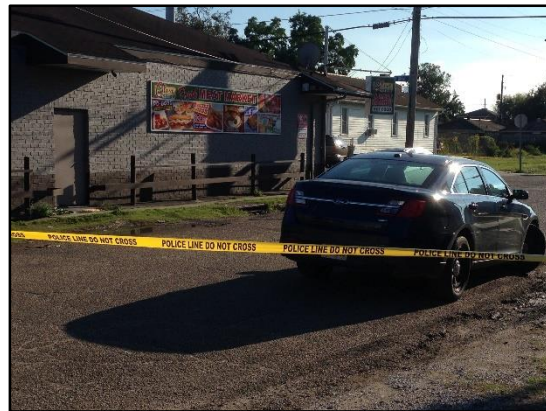
Figure 18. Police tape marking the crime scene, November 2, 2016 at the Olive Superette.

Once the tape was removed I was able to travel to the yard in front of a friend's house where the victim had collapsed. A neighbor had come with a shovel to remove the blood pooled

on the dirt in front of their porch. Several other neighbors were gathered on the porch and told me that the victim had been standing next to a young man who was part of the 20-something male focus group in this study, someone I knew well. It was the second time in the past several years that someone standing next to him was shot in broad daylight. One of the neighbors on the porch had held the victim, urging him to stay alive because his brother had also been shot and killed and the family could not handle another shooting death. Also on the porch was Arianne, another participant in this study who had lost her husband to gun violence and was a classmate of Brandon Aggison; at this moment the study had come full circle with two shootings at the Olive Superette, one at the beginning and the other at the end.

The block between General Ogden and Hollygrove Streets had been the site of several homicides as well. Morris Smith, known in the neighborhood as Iceman, was killed on this block on December 12, 2012. This drug-related shooting also occurred in the daytime, in front of a vacant, overgrown lot. Iceman had been released from federal prison for drug trafficking nine months previous. A newspaper article reported that the shooter's brother had stolen drugs from him and was afraid that he would talk to the police about the incident (Purpura, 2015). For several years afterwards a collection of stuffed animals was duct-taped to the telephone pole in front of the lot as a memorial.

The left side of the street on this block was a combination of seven single and double homes and a mixture of renters and homeowners. There were two vacant lots, the one where Iceman was killed was overgrown and poorly maintained, the other had been converted into a garden by the adjacent homeowner. One of these homes had been abandoned since Katrina and was in an advanced state of disrepair. The right side of this block began with two units constructed immediately before Katrina to be used as Section 8 rental housing by a white man

who lives outside of the neighborhood. The first is a four-plex unit, too large for the lot upon which it was constructed; one unit was vacant with plywood over the door. This building had been a source of tension for some in the community when a drug dealer lived there. Its location, across General Ogden from the Olive Superette, situated it near a source of customers for both the corner store and the drug dealer. Several residents approached the landlord and notified him of the activities of his tenants which resulted in the drug dealer's eviction. The next unit was a double, painted to match the four-plex and owned by the same landlord. An overgrown vacant lot stood between it and the next home, a pink modular unit built after Katrina by the young family who owned it. The next three units were also homeowner occupied, all by elderly residents who had freshly painted them. An overgrown vacant lot ended the block.

After Katrina such an array of vacant homes and lots, intermixed with occupied units, became known as the "jack-o-lantern" effect. The comparison was to a carved Halloween pumpkin where the teeth had gaps between. This block, along with the remaining four, were excellent examples of the jack-o-lantern effect.

Upon crossing Hollygrove Street to the left was the home of a recently-deceased matriarch of the community. Her home was a modular, built by students at a trade school in New Hampshire and erected upon pilings using a crane that swung the two halves of the home into place. The home where she previously lived was next door and was decaying; both were vacant. Two homeowner-occupied singles and a vacant lot were followed by an occupied single, a one-story, four-unit cinderblock apartment and a red-brick two-story home that once was the residence of a local physician who operated a blacks-only clinic in the neighborhood during the Segregation Era. On the right side of Olive Street was a futuristic-looking yellow home constructed after Katrina by a neighborhood pastor and his wife. The next home was a single,

brick home abandoned since Katrina. Two singles followed, the residences of elderly

homeowners. Completing the block was an overgrown lot and an abandoned eight-unit

apartment building.

Hamilton Street crossed Olive at this point, an artery used by many to travel through the

neighborhood to the suburbs, allowing motorists to avoid heavy traffic on Carrollton Avenue.

On the left side of Olive was an abandoned brick single followed by an abandoned eight-unit

apartment building. Two vacant lots, both recently mowed, were followed by the only occupied

home on the block. Across the street was Conrad Playground, also known as Frederic Square.

Unlike the Carrollton Booster playground six blocks away, Conrad was a place the neighbors felt

welcomed. It consisted of a large baseball diamond with bleachers on Olive and Hamilton, a

yellow field house with a concession stand, a basketball court covered with a metal roof, and a

small playground for children. Both the baseball diamond and the basketball courts were lighted

at night. The playground was built by a collaborative effort between Trinity Christian

Community and KaBoom in 2011. The park had a supervisor and offered programs for the

community. New chain link fences surrounded the park as did trees planted by volunteers after

Katrina. The park previously experienced significant flooding after heavy rains but a storm

water management project by Tulane University City Center and the Carrollton Hollygrove

Community Development Corporation had ameliorated it. The park was inviting and played host

to many community functions, including the recent Night Out Against Crime and a religious

revival conducted by St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church.

Figure 19. Conrad Playground.

Figure 20. Olive Street ends at the railroad track.

The park symbolized the divide between the first four blocks of Olive and the remainder. While Carrollton Playground was almost exclusively the domain of white New Orleanians traveling to the neighborhood from elsewhere, Conrad was almost exclusively used by African Americas from the community. Claude, a study participant in his late 80s, remembered when the park was off-limits to blacks during New Orleans' segregation years, "when we was comin' up, we couldn't go on the playground. We're black, and you couldn't go in there. Well, we used to go over there and jump then fence when there weren't nobody there and play ball, and the police would come and run us out of there because by being black we wasn't supposed to be in there." He would later become president of the park's booster club, using his contacts with Shell Oil to build the bleachers and equip the field house with park equipment. While Conrad had changed, the racial divide still existed elsewhere in Hollygrove.

One block away from the park, on Hamilton, was the Carrollton Hollygrove Multipurpose Center, a newly-constructed community center dedicated in November of 2015. It was once the site of the Robinson Clinic, a hospital that offered a wide array of medical services to African Americans who couldn't receive treatment elsewhere due to segregation. Claude

remembered the clinic as a place where "whether you had any money or not, Dr. Robinson was gonna take care of you." The clinic, also a reminder of Hollygrove's racialized past, was converted into a senior center after its closure. The original clinic building was razed after Katrina and its replacement was constructed using FEMA funds.

The final two blocks of Olive, before the street reached a dead end at the railroad tracks abutting Airline Highway, were almost equally divided between blighted and abandoned structures and livable dwellings. Crossing Mistletoe, looking to the left was a double, a single unit occupied by a homeowner, a home undergoing renovation, two blighted structures, a single and a home that had been under renovation since Katrina. On the other side of the street was a single, an overgrown vacant lot, a newly constructed single, a blighted home that has collapsed, a single and a vacant lot. The neglected structures on this block stood in strong contrast to the habited units. Overgrown grass, cracked sidewalks and broken windows marked the blighted units, while the occupied units were well-maintained and showed pride of ownership. As I drove down the block young boys were playing basketball in front of one of the homes, the grandchildren of the retired postal worker who owned it. Claude lived on this block, and he could often be seen on the porch watching Conrad Park across the street. A proud, elderly homeowner possessing a strong commitment to the betterment of the neighborhood, he was one of the first to return and rebuild his home. From his porch one could also see significant blight, testament to others who lacked his commitment to the neighborhood and, via neglect of their properties, negatively impacted his quality of life.

The final block of Olive Street, crossing Cherry, was only a half block, made triangular in shape by train tracks that run alongside Airline Highway. On the left was a double rental unit, followed by a renovated single home, a blighted home with a semi-truck's tractor parked in a

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small driveway and two vacant, overgrown lots on each side of an occupied single. On the other side of Olive were two homes that appeared to be in imminent danger of collapse. The tracks at the end of the street were elevated and prohibited further travel. Beyond those tracks, across Airline highway, lay the Metairie Country Club, self-described as "a haven of leisurely social elegance" (Welcome to the Metairie Country Club, 2016). Those tracks, coupled with a drainage canal along the parish line, blocked two sides of the community and prevented either ingress or egress. The major arteries on the remaining borders of the neighborhood, I-10, Carrollton Avenue, Earhart Expressway and Claiborne Avenue also encumbered vehicular traffic from Hollygrove.

The railway beds at either end of black Hollygrove served to delineate the neighborhood's separation from white New Orleans, vivid symbols of the marginalization of this neighborhood. The Monticello drainage canal and the major surrounding arteries also limited residents' ability to move in and out of the community. It was as if the neighborhood had been separated from the rest of the city, designed with visible reminders to those living there of their place and status.

Freeman (2006) described inner city neighborhoods like Hollygrove as "neighborhoods excluded from the mainstream of American life" (p. 188), places set apart by the abandonment of those with means and businesses that served them. This occurred twice in Hollygrove. First, the white flight of the 1970s transformed Hollygrove, leaving behind abandoned businesses, producing a plethora of absentee landlords and changing the racial mixture of the neighborhood. A second flight occurred after Katrina when a portion of the residents chose to abandon their flood-soaked homes and relocated elsewhere. Olive Street's vacant lots and abandoned homes

served as reminders of these twin exoduses and of its marginalization relative to more prosperous neighborhoods.

Massey and Denton (1993) concluded that marginalized neighborhoods like Hollygrove represented "the key institutional arrangement ensuring the continued subordination of blacks in the United States" (p. 18). Later Sampson (2012) would further note that "racial inequality in the American city cannot be understood absent a direct consideration of the role of spatially inscribed social advantage and disadvantage" (p. 372). The first four blocks of Hollygrove, were an almost exclusively white-controlled domain complete with private police patrols to insulate it from the challenges that Hollygrove residents faced daily. Just beyond the tracks at the neighborhood's conclusion was a bastion of privilege, the Metairie Country Club. In between were the social ills wrought by years of segregation and subsequent neglect. Olive Street bore witness to the institutional arrangements of New Orleans that isolate communities like Hollygrove, leading to social disadvantage and perpetuating racial inequality.

Wacquant (2008) posited that a grave mistake in theories of urban slums had been the transformation of sociological conditions into psychological traits. Rather than understanding neighborhoods like Hollygrove via policy decisions that relegated African Americans to decaying neighborhoods, these theories pathologized the victims. In this scenario Hollygrove was a bad neighborhood because bad people lived there. Olive Street served as an example that the reality is more complicated. While Olive Street did have one corner that was statistically more dangerous than others, it also had places of privilege like the Carrollton Playground, places of innovation like the Greenline, places of abandonment like the lots and vacant homes, places of structural neglect like the sewerage lift pump leaking into a vacant yard, and places of security like the occupied family homes newly constructed since Katrina. In short, Olive Street served as

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a visual reminder that neighborhoods are complex places requiring closer scrutiny if we are to better understand the dynamics that give rise to violent crime. The following chapters describe how neighborhood residents view their lives, their neighborhoods and violent crime.

Chapter 6: Findings

Hollygrove's Clash between Prosocial and Subcultural Values

In Hollygrove there was a strong sense that community values were changing. On the one hand was a recognition that traditional values were important. On the other was the reality that these values were at risk of not being transmitted by a new generation of parents ill-equipped for the task of parenting. In addition, grandparents were raising a second, and sometimes third generation of children during a time of life when energy and motivation were flagging. While traditional values continued to be widely acknowledged as important to the well-being of the community, there was a strong fear that a younger generation had failed to adopt them. The subsequent clash of values was thought to be important to the understanding of neighborhood-level violence.

Elderly residents were especially concerned that values long considered central to neighborhood stability were not being instilled in or espoused by a younger generation. One community leader explained it this way "when we were growing up we had, it was a value system that was shared by a larger community" while a senior noted "the neighborhood has a lot more people who don't have those values than before." The perceived failure of these values to be effectively transmitted to younger generations had many seniors concerned. This chapter addressees the tension between long-established, prosocial values of the older residents of Hollygrove as they conflicted with newer values of a younger generation.

Of the 20 values reflected in the data, five were most frequent while others appeared to be outliers mentioned only once or twice in the interviews. The most prominent were that prosocial values transmission was lacking, that the ethic of caring neighbors had waned,

recognition that the perceived work ethic which built the neighborhood was disappearing, that pride of ownership was being lost, and that there had been a demise of prosocial conflict resolution skills. In the following sections these values are discussed.

A Lost Generation: Failing to Transmit Prosocial Values

Hollygrove residents understood the importance of prosocial values to be an important key to neighborhood safety. At the same time many expressed anxiety that these values were neither being adequately transmitted to nor adopted by younger generations. They connected this phenomenon to Hollygrove's violence.

During a focus group conducted with neighborhood senior citizens one commented, "It is a lost generation," suggesting that older, prosocial societal norms written about by Lynd and Lynd (1959) were no longer being embraced by a younger generation. A middle-aged neighborhood entrepreneur who relocated his neighborhood business from the community after Katrina thought this began "when the 80s came along and children started having children and it was like some kind of communication gap." Comments like this were widely reflected by the data and indicated a concern that modern childrearing practices were failing to impress upon children the importance of values considered important. Study participants connected this to the advent of teen pregnancy and younger, less prepared parents.   A former police chief noted "families have got to start raising and taking care of their children and families have to force their children to comply to what has been now at least 2000 years of good social skills." A former drug dealer, now in his late 50s called it "a downhill generation gap" where a sort of entropic effect had occurred as prosocial values had lost their import simultaneous to the neighborhood's increase in violence.

This was not solely the sentiment of older residents. A single mother in her late 20s whose spouse was killed in a neighborhood shooting reflected this understanding as she considered her younger sister's parenting of preadolescent sons saying "she just let them go and let the streets raise them" and "they going to be the next generation, they going to be standing on the corner and they going to be the next bad boys." Discussing what differentiates between those who sell drugs and those who do not, a male in his early 20s concluded it was because "you was raised up good, you had guidance." Another male, a single homeowner in his 20s, noted "they have to have values instilled in them at a young age." Thus there was a broad sense that something had changed in Hollygrove, that children lacked the values necessary for success.

The years between birth and five were considered to be a key period in values development by community members. One grandmother, who ran a licensed neighborhood day care center, addressed community attitudes toward young, teen males this way, "people complain about the teenagers, but who raised the teenagers" adding "if you grow to 10, 11, 12 and you haven't gotten it in those first five years, you gonna look at a child that is hardened." She concluded that adults needed "to focus on spending more time with kids."

A key concern for many was the age of those raising children. One senior remarked "young ladies started having these babies early in life and they didn't know how to take care of them and children raised themselves." It wasn't just mothers that received such criticism, one 20-something male added that "daddies don't want to take care of them." A man in his 70s thought that "one of the biggest factors is single parent families" and "absentee daddies." Residents also expressed concern about the longevity of this phenomenon. A former neighborhood resident, now a key city official, observed:

> when you have a grandmother that's 35 or 36, alright, the daughter is what 16, okay, and then the child is two or three. Alright then you got the grandmother that's now 40, the

daughter is 20, and the child is like 6 or 7, the grandmother's probably stopped in high school to have the baby but she didn't go back or, you know, unfortunately had a very minimum wage job, and didn't take any kind of means to get out of that so they caught is this system and all they know is the streets.

Because values transmission was thought to occur primarily through families, residents considered the youthfulness of parents to be a key in the failure to pass prosocial values to the next generation.

Residents also expressed concern for grandparents upon whom parenting duties sometimes fell due to parental neglect. One senior thought some grandparents were "being held hostage by their own grandchildren," while another pointed out:

a lot of children have parents that's in prisons, a lot of 'em parents are dead, because of the shootings and they have grandparents and relatives taking care of these kids and a lot of 'em is not doing what they's supposed to be doing with these kids.

A community leader related a conversation with one grandparent living with four generations of offspring this way:

she just accepted it as status quo, that's just the way it is. I said I couldn't have my grandkids, um, you know walking across the store while there's a drug deal going down and I know it's going down, I just couldn't do it. She hunched her shoulders, you know.

The grandmother being described was in her late 70s. She had suffered a series of debilitating losses including a heart attack, losing her home to Katrina, the imprisonment of her daughter, all while attempting to hold her large family together. Her exhaustion was palpable.

Newman (1999) wrote "Focusing on the deviant cases, on the whoring mothers, the criminal fathers, the wilding teenagers, and the abandoned toddlers merely confirms a knowing helplessness or worse: a Darwinian conviction that perhaps we should just 'let it burn,' sacrificing the present generation in the hope of rehabilitating future ghetto dwellers" (p. 187). Hollygrove residents, when considering the failure of the present generation to adequately transmit prosocial values, appeared to reflect this pessimism. Addressing the current state of

community values, they expressed the widespread opinion that much of the responsibility for the community's demise was rooted in a generation of children that do not reflect the values of previous generations, values considered to be paramount to community well-being. Despite this sentiment, these values continue to be espoused across the spectrum of generations, although not without conflict. Throughout the remainder of this chapter four of these conflicted values will be discussed through the voices of the community.

A Place Where You Can Trust Your Neighbors: The Importance of Caring

Sampson (2012) defined collective efficacy as "social cohesion combined with shared expectations for social control" (p. 27). Dr. T, a 30-something male physician who intentionally relocated to the community to be part of its revival, described it as "a place where you can trust your neighbors." Many Hollygrove residents appear to long for a nostalgic past where neighbors cared for each other, where doors could be unlocked, and where norms were shared and practiced. There was widespread conviction that this was missing, but that there may be a revival of sorts that had begun to occur. Meanwhile there was a tension between the ethic of caring neighbors described by older residents and the self-preservation valued by younger residents.

As we sat on his porch at sundown a neighborhood rapper in his 20s described street life as a value he described as "you bout yours." This sentiment is part of a street code that younger residents term "Keeping It Real" which will be described at length in the next chapter. This particular value, minding one's own business while ignoring others, is important to this section as it conflicted with Sampson's concept of collective efficacy. It was echoed by Eldridge, a young homeowner in his late 20s, who noted the conflict between 'being bout yours' and the

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value of neighborliness by noting "it's hard, it's like you got people that don't want someone else in their business" adding "everybody got that it's all about themselves type of viewpoint" while personally espousing the view that "we got to look out for each other." Claude, a lifelong resident of the neighborhood provided the conflicting view, held by many seniors like him, "Everybody's hooray for me and Daniel! I think the society has changed. We don't have that, that maybe the love for one another and most of all respect."

Like Eldridge and Claude, those with a longer perspective on the community could recall a time when collective efficacy was the norm. Charles, a reformed drug dealer in his late 50s remembered when "Hollygrove was like one big family," where "everybody was close knit" while Tamika, a 40-something, recalled her childhood in the neighborhood as a time when "you kinda knew everybody" as contrasted with the present when "everybody is kinda to themselves." Angela, a lifelong resident had lived in the center of the neighborhood all her life and saw firsthand the deterioration of the street in front of her home during the heyday of the violence. Now in her 60s she nostalgically described a Hollygrove where "it was not necessary to lock up" and when "we used to sleep on the front porch sometimes." The crime in her block, although it had lessened recently, made that impossible, as evidenced by her assertion that "now you cannot do any of that." She thought that crime had a deterring effect on the neighborhood's ethic of mutual concern and people had become "frightened from helping other people." The fear that Angela described was more prominently expressed by those who lived closer to crime hotspots.

Other parts of the community, especially those with high homeownership and distant from high-crime locations still subscribed to the older value of neighborliness. Dr. T described these as places where there are "neighbors that speak and care about each other and look after each other." He thought this happened when residents had "been there long enough to care about

each other." The contrast between Dr. T's and Angela's comments indicated that those living more distant from neighborhood violence hotspots exhibited the value of caring while those nearer them were more prone to live by subcultural values.

The conflict between minding one's business and caring for the community was perceived to have ramifications for neighborhood safety. A focus group of community leaders addressed the challenge by suggesting that "community involvement has played a big part in Hollygrove" and "engaging people" was the way to produce positive change. One police official further added that the recent successes in reducing crime were due to "the great work of the community" and noted "the only way that the masses can get rid of the few people that are terrorizing the neighborhood is to stand up and say, 'We're not going to do that anymore'." Dr. T thought also this value needed to be more widespread, that "it's just getting out to the community that everybody has a part to play." One city official in the Mayor's office proposed the key to neighborhood safety lay in "the ability for a neighborhood to set norms about appropriate behavior and you don't do certain things here." This happened, he noted, when "a neighborhood working in concert can, in all the ways cultures are reinforced, through their language, through their shared behaviors, values, and all the rest, say this is not something that is happening here." These voices reflected Jacobs' (1961) thinking that eyes on the street were an important facet of neighborhood safety, while minding one's own business was detrimental.

The complete destruction of the neighborhood following Hurricane Katrina forced a re-envisioning of the community during which a community development association was founded, a neighborhood association became active, city officials were engaged, and outside resources came to the community through a variety of means. The result was the engagement of residents, mostly seniors, who began working to re-establish collective efficacy. The successes that

followed included a significant reduction in neighborhood violence between 2012 and 2015. A sense of optimism had begun to take root, suggesting that caring relationships in the neighborhood had re-emerged. At the same time several expressed concern that seniors could not sustain the efforts and thus the value of caring neighbors must be adopted by a younger generation. In the words of a current police official "Hollygrove had a reputation and probably rightfully so—as a very violent neighborhood. Only in recent times, only I would say, only in post-2012, post-2010, has it really, the violence really dramatically dropped off compared to what it was." Yet he cautioned "it's really hinging upon like, you know, community leadership; and is that gonna sustain? Some of the community leaders are, you know, a little older."

While resident efforts to re-engage the community had borne some success, the tension between self-preservation and an ethic of caring for neighbors continued. The work required to re-establish diminished prosocial values was daunting. Although hard work was not foreign to the oldtimers in the community, there was strong sentiment that this value was another that had not been effectively transmitted to the younger generation.

Raised to be Productive: Valuing Hard Work

While older residents thought hard work was an important facet of neighborhood safety, younger residents described structural impediments limiting their ability to engage in the formal economy. This led to a second values clash in the community one between hard, legitimate work in the formal economy and the alternative pathways to economic success through the informal economy. Older residents viewed younger residents as lazy and lacking commitment to education. Conversely younger residents described an inadequate educational system coupled with structural forces that limited their ability to find gainful employment in a changing

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economy. Waquant (2008) described the modern urban ghetto as one that was segregated on the basis of race and class in the context of the retrenchment of the labor market and welfare state from the urban core and the subsequent deployment of the omnipresent police force. Wilson (1990) chronicled the conundrum faced by inner city males as the availability of livable wage jobs requiring less than a college degree shifted away from the urban core replaced by low paying service sector employment. Thus what appears to be laziness to longtime residents is seen by the younger generation as structural impediments to engagement in the formal economy.

In a focus group of young males one railed "you gotta think about how we got to the ghetto, like somebody put us here" while another added "we could sit up here and talk to you for 300 and 400 years, however long it took to put black people in the position they in right now." The harsh reality of urban joblessness was exacerbated by racism, as epitomized by another's criticism, "when they try to do better and stuff like, then it's like man, we not about to hire you, it's like, damn, I just filled out for this job, I'm a dishwasher, the white man filled out and went straight to the bar" or "once I become white I'm normal, I'm what this country was made for." One solution, espoused by the group was to avoid the formal market and participate in the illicit economy, "why would I go to work when I could make this much money on the corner" and "selling drugs is the first thing we see that can give us money like that (snaps his fingers) like at a constant pace."

Despite these sentiments, the group expressed conflicting views about participation in the informal economy, stating "the young guys don't want to work for what they want, they want to take it" and "that's the problem with my generation, they don't want to work for nothing." They were not alone. Also expressing the conflict was Tameka, the 40-something homeowner who recognized the importance of the value of hard work juxtaposed with the lack of jobs for

neighborhood residents. She stated, "Whatever it is, you have to work for it. Nothing is given to you. Not back then, not now, not ever. You have to work for it but if you can't find a job where can you get these things."

The senior citizens were less understanding. Their adherence to the value of hard work for individual and collective success was captured by Claude, an 80-something retiree who helped numerous men find jobs in his career as a supervisor. He noted "when you work, you can respect yourself" and "when you get it yourself, you can feel proud. I worked and got this for mine." Claude told me that he worked two jobs in his youth, leaving a job at the paint factory to work nights as a hotel bellboy in order to provide an education for his children. Zora, a 60-something day care provider thought that "things has to be worked for" and that people need to "get off our butts and do what we need to do."

Seniors viewed the younger generation as lazy, implying they had no desire to find employment. One member of the senior focus group stated "they don't want to work" echoing the sentiments of Charles, the former drug dealer, who stated "the younger generation, they don't do nothing" adding "they want to have an easy life, an easy income." He contrasted that with the way he was raised, adding "if you're brought up properly, to be productive, that would stop…all that drugging." It was difficult for them to understand the younger generation's lack of value in hard work believing that the younger generation had chosen to "sit down under the moon instead of trying to improve theyself" and "sit around the porch from one to the other, from morning to evening." A senior official in the city's Department of Aging shared their sentiment noting, "they want to get by and that's it."

Still other seniors blamed the welfare system. One focus group member thought the younger generation was content to "let somebody else take care of their family" implying that

somebody was the federal government. Another stated young people "just wanna sit down, receive government money, receive government food." A third judged the government's public assistance priorities to be misguided when she said "the government taking care of them and the poor seniors suffering trying to make it." Charles provided a more moderated view of the public assistance system proposing that "welfare is good because it helps you get on your feet but if you get comfortable with that you don't have to do nothing." There was widespread thinking that welfare should be temporary lest it negate the importance of hard work for attaining personal and social good.

Most presumed that hard work was necessary for the success of the community. The informal economy, a subject of a later chapter, was seen as either an unfortunate, but necessary alternative means of income or as an excuse for laziness by those who do not value hard work. While none in this study thought the illicit marketplace was good for the community, the younger generation expressed greater sympathy for those whose lives depend upon it given the structural impediments to participation in the formal economy. Welfare was widely panned as a cause for failure to espouse the value of hard work. Ultimately, while Hollygrove residents connected hard work and success, they disagreed about why some do not work; older residents attributed it to laziness and welfare dependency, while younger ones connected it to poor education and structural impediments to labor force participation.

Homeowners Care More: Pride of Ownership

Hollygrove's homeowners described a third value, pride of place, which they connected to valuing and protecting the community. Wiese (2004), writing about homeownership in the black South, proposed that homeownership represented "evidence of permanence, a marker of

achievement, and the satisfaction of a long-deferred dream" and that African American

communities were considered by many to be places of "social comfort and cultural affirmation if

not racial pride, a 'safe place' in which to nurture families and educate children, a symbol of

resistance to white supremacy and a foundation for politics, if not economic and racial power"

(p. 8). One community leader captured this value noting, "when you value even just the road

that you live on, the house that you have, the flowers that you grow in your own garden, that

kind of stuff, like I think it changes your whole perception of everything."

There was also the sense that younger, more transient residents who rented, especially

those who used Section 8 housing vouchers, did not share this pride of place. One senior focus

group member epitomized this concern:

> In the neighborhood where you have homeowners, working people, retired people,
> they're quiet. But when you get the young people start migrating in after somebody die
> and the house is for rent, somebody found out about doing Section 8, they go in and make
> all the necessary adjustments, you move a family in, 4 or 5 children, that's when it starts
> coming, the neighborhood starts going down. So, with just a working class of people
> there, the senior citizens there, it was quiet. Because everybody knew everybody,
> church-going people, but when they start getting younger people move in the
> neighborhood, moving in from outside, that's it.

This comment expressed the concern of many homeowners of all ages about the encroachment of

rental properties. There was a fear that a tipping point was imminent with potential to upset the

balance between the long-term stability of those with an ownership stake in the community as

contrasted with those who are less residentially stable. Residents thought that a critical mass of

homeownership was an important component of neighborhood safety.

Pride of ownership was best described by Claude as he recalled the day he purchased his

home:

> I think by being a property owner, you're gonna protect what you work hard to get, you
> know. You take back when we bought this house. I bought it from my brother-in-law
> because it was a family piece of property. I think I paid $15,000 for the house. And

man, that was one of my proudest days when I, when my wife and I signed the papers. We had, this was our house. It's, you know, that's—that's something to motivate you, self-motivation. Yes, indeed. That's, when you're hustling to get something and you know eventually it's gonna be yours. And that was during the time when people was proud when they owned something, and when they, especially when they bought an automobile, even a second-hand automobile. You were proud of that.

Several blocks away, across from a corner store shuttered since Katrina which was a noted crime hotspot, Charles commented on what he thought to be a diminished pride of ownership, "because I know everyone, I would see how this neighborhood is deteriorating and people are not taking care of their homes back here, taking care of their properties and don't have pride in the neighborhood or for the community."

Ernest, a community businessman, took a more militant approach to this values clash. To him ceding his block to those who didn't share his pride of ownership was like losing a battle, where the more violent places in the neighborhood had waved a white flag and given up:

The parts that's dangerous, they're the parts that's been surrendered. I mean that nobody fighting for it, they've surrendered. That block surrendered. I had a block I ain't surrendered my block until I left. I used to round up all my neighbors when I do, we got a whole lot of block now, I can't guarantee that block but we can secure this block for our children. Just keep them off the next block, we got our block and then go talk to them about securing they block. It was working for a while, you know just be firm, "Look, you can't stand here, I understand you can stand at the park over here, Conrad Park, there are other places you can go, but you cannot sit here and congregate in front of my house and please do not sit on my steps. You gotta move." You gotta do that every day for like two years til we got our block back.

This value reflected economic realities, according to a police official who said "the more, I guess material things people have, they're less likely to want to lose them." He forwarded this equation, "as the economics of an area increase, crime goes down." He was not alone; Daneta, a single mom in her late 20s remarked that people with means who are "already set and maybe owning their houses and whatever the case may be, it's just that they're living in a different place from where these young black kids are out there," suggesting that, although she is not a

homeowner herself, those who have purchased their home have a different set of priorities and are more protective of their space.

Many in this study thought that those who don't own their home have a lesser stake in the long-term well-being of Hollygrove. This may be exacerbated by the fact that a significant number of homes were abandoned after Katrina by those who moved away. This, too, is connected to a feeling of danger. Dr. T noted there are "some of the different parts of Hollygrove that haven't been kept up as much, they give off a certain, certain, you know when you look at them you're like, ugh, this is a rougher place." He refers to this as "a visual representation of what's going on in the block." These sections of the community were considered by several respondents to be the domain of renters and absentee landlords who did not share the pride of place that longer-term homeowners embraced.

Patillo (2007), in her study of Chicago's south side neighborhoods, concurred with these voices noting that "What homeowners share is a financial investment in their homes and a desire to protect it" (p. 14). Not everyone had sufficient means to purchase a home or was fortunate enough to inherit one. The challenge Hollygrove residents faced is transmitting the pride of place to those who were not able to own their place of residence. The neighborhood had experienced a drop in homeownership in the last 10 years, from 54.2% to 50.7% (Greater New Orleans Community Data Center). During the same period vacant housing units increased from 10.9% to 32.9% (Greater New Orleans Community Data Center) driven in part by housing units abandoned after Katrina. The loss of homeowners on the one hand and the increase of vacant dwellings may have exacerbated community fears regarding pride of place. In the words of one police official:

> You know, how many haunted house–looking buildings, structures do you have back there, you know what I mean? So until Hollygrove can knock those buildings down—and

not only knock 'em down but I mean, having abandoned lots everywheres, even if the grass is maintained, still doesn't give a person the impression of a healthy neighborhood, you know what I mean? I wouldn't wanna live in a neighborhood that had abandoned lots every, you know, like almost like a jack-o-lantern effect…

The changed in neighborhood ownership patterns left homeowners with two options: either find innovative methods of converting the vacant homes and lots into homeownership opportunities or develop means to transmit pride of place to renters.

They Use Violence to Solve Problems: A Lack of Prosocial Conflict Resolution Skills

Hollygrove's final major values clash was between those that adhered to prosocial values concerning how conflicts are resolved and those who used violence to resolve it. Many residents observed a dangerous decline in the way younger community members resolve conflicts, that prosocial methods of conflict resolution had been abandoned for violent ones. Dr. T described it by noting both the loss of ability to verbally resolve problems and the increasing lethality of conflict resolution strategies:

Growing up, which I'm sure was the same way for you, it was never about a gun. It was always you fight, the next day you talk it out, you're fine. Now it's totally different, you do something to me you're going to lose your life. It's weird to me because if people really appreciated life they wouldn't resort to that. That's the big problem right there.

Tamesha, a college student in her early 20s, connected Hollygrove's violence to "how people handle their problems" noting that lack of conflict resolution skills had created a context where violence became acceptable. Ernest described advice he gave to peers who had violent encounters with their significant others:

If I ever talk to a friend of mine and I find they done struck or hit their girlfriend or wife, then I tell them, "Well that's not as much an anger problem, that's an intellectual problem." I say, "Because if she's moved you to blows with word, that mean you ran out of words. You got physical. So she's a little bit too intellectual for you, so you either need to come up to her level or let her go, cause she's not going to come down to yours. You either got to step up or step off. That's the only two.

Like Dr T, Tamesha and Ernest, many thought there were prosocial ways to manage conflict besides violence.

Elijah Anderson (1999) referred to this clash as one between as the street and decent codes. A former police chief addressed the street code of conflict resolution this way: "New Orleans has had an abnormally high murder rate since 100 years. There's some part of our culture that recognizes that violence is a way to dispute, mediation dispute that I'm not really seeing in other places." Anderson (1994) captured the two sides of this clash concluding it represented "two poles of value orientation, two contrasting conceptual categories" (p. 35). This oppositional code of violence and aggression "springs from the circumstances of life among the ghetto poor—the lack of jobs that pay a living wage, the stigma or race, the fallout from rampant drug use and drug trafficking, and the resulting alienation and lack of hope for the future" (Anderson, 1994, para. 1).

Hollygrove residents saw the growing acceptance of violence as a conflict resolution tactic through three lenses: deeply entrenched poverty, normalization of violent strategies, and the emerging perception that the use of handguns had become a viable conflict resolution strategy. Zora, the 60-something day care provider, reflected upon the first of these stating "if you have a poor class of people in a neighborhood, naturally you're gonna have more anger." The focus group with males in their early 20s yielded another reflection upon structural inequities as one pointed out "the worst thing for a black man who already who lost everything, feel like he don't have nothing to lose" while another noted "it's hard for us to keep our head held up high when we get held down." The anger they experienced had few appropriate outlets leading another to state "we broke, all of us got problems, we sit around and talk about our problems all day and we only know a few ways to solve 'em." One community leader connected

this anomic condition to neighborhood violence noting, "if you allow yourself to feel this anger and if you allow yourself to feel you have no dignity, it would destroy you." She understood neighborhood violence to occur when some residents enacted their emotional distress through destructive behaviors directed toward the community rather than the systems that caused it.

Many residents observed that violence as a conflict resolution strategy had a long history in the community and was considered to be acceptable. Charles, the former drug dealer, remembered a time in Hollygrove's distant past when "you'd have a fight and then you'd go out to Conrad and play football" or "you'd have a fist fight and that's about it." Kobe, a college student in his early 20s shared this nostalgic view of the past, even though he was too young to remember it:

> I mean at least from what I hear they used to settle it fighting, fist-fight, you know. Even when I was younger that was kind of, still kind of a thing, you know? Fight. If you fight someone and y'all fight, I mean y'all both live and fight and you may have a bruise or a black eye or something but you're living and go back to your family, you know, and it helps, it pretty much helps you know get that dirt off your chest if you will, that's what we used to say, "Get that dirt off your chest." And, um, and it'll be it, that'll be it, it's over with now.

These views normalized neighborhood violence as a means for resolving conflicts, contrasting the older method of fist fighting with more lethal forms used currently. They pointed to a perception that nonviolent options, at least for males, were considered insufficient solutions. When a neighborhood male failed to physically defend himself he was considered a punk, which is an expression used to describe one who was effeminate and prone to victimization. Anderson (1994) pointed out that in the street codes of the inner city, backing down from conflict had the potential to "leave one's self esteem in tatters" and thus "people feel constrained not only to stand up and at least attempt to resist during an assault but also to 'pay back'—to seek revenge—

after a successful assault on their person" (para. 27). In a neighborhood context where violence was normalized, prosocial conflict resolution alternatives were neglected.

In recent years the methods of violence used to resolve conflicts had become more lethal. One city official commenting upon this shift noted "when I was growing up, you settled it with your fists. Now you settle it with a 9mm." Another noted "There's a common refrain that I hear from people is oh we, it wasn't so bad back in the day, people would just fight it out or maybe someone feels really bad, someone gets stabbed but now it's so much worse people take their life. Well all that really points to is a difference in the tool." This was also reflected in the 20-something male focus group when one remarked "those oldtimers back in the day will tell you, man, we never shot guns, we fought to solve our problems. We never, once my generation came, after the 90s, the 2000 generation, they was using guns for everything." Throughout the interviews there was common sentiment that something had shifted, that the tools used to resolve conflict had become more deadly.

Despite the normalization of violence as conflict resolution strategy there was a recognition that prosocial methods of conflict resolution are better for the neighborhood. Robert, whose choice of violence led to a prison term, told me:

> The few times I've been involved in them (lethal altercations) it just goes from a talk to a fuss to blunt out fussing and disrespecting each other to where it's, alright I be right back or you ain't gonna, you know. If people sit there and think, you take five minutes out to think of the consequences of what you about to do, I would guarantee you wouldn't do it. I say that all the time. I say, man, if I had just thought about the consequences of my actions and what I'm about to do right now, I wouldn't even be in here.

He recognized that his choice to use guns to resolve conflict negatively impacted his life and harmed the community. A former resident, now in city government, suggested "it's a macho thing, it's people want to (shoot), instead of having a disagreement and settle an argument through words." These comments reflected the voices of several others who understood that less

lethal conflict strategies would make the neighborhood a safer place and improve the life chances for community residents.

The conflict between prosocial values of nonviolent and violent conflict resolution strategies mirrored the conflict between street and decent codes about which Elijah Anderson had written. He concluded the two orientations "socially organize the community, and their coexistence has important consequences for residents—especially children. Above all, this environment means that even youngsters whose home lives reflect mainstream values—and the majority of homes in the community do—must be able to handle themselves in a street-oriented environment" (Anderson, 1994, para. 2). Those subscribing to prosocial values understood that conflicts could be resolved through dialogue while street values normalized physical and lethal means. The conflict between these two sets of values helped to explain the challenge that many younger residents experienced as they struggle to negotiate the street subculture inside the neighborhood and the world of decent values beyond Hollygrove's borders.

Summary

Throughout the rebuilding of Hollygrove, in the years since Katrina, there had been an attempt by neighborhood residents to re-establish the primacy of prosocial values. This charge was led primarily by the seniors, those who could recall a time when Hollygrove was a much different neighborhood. This hopefulness was tempered by a recognition that times had changed and that many neither shared their optimism nor subscribed to the values of the past, expressed in the words of Claude who said "their life values are not what they were when I was growing up." In some ways the neighborhood was at a crossroads, possibly a tipping point, as epitomized by the ratio of homeowners to renters, an almost evenly-divided split. On the one hand Hollygrove

had experienced a revival of sorts: crime was lower, a neighborhood bar long seen to be a hotspot for crime had been closed, there was a new school and a new community center, the police and politicians had taken a renewed interest in the neighborhood, property values seemed to be increasing—an increase in social capital. On the other hand, many of the forces that led to its pre-Katrina violence appeared to have a continued, albeit less-powerful influence.

The clash of values in Hollygrove was in many ways a conflict between older and younger residents. Those who lived through segregation and worked to create neighborhood pride recognized that interdependence and shared values were important to Hollygrove's viability in the face of the structural inequities that limited opportunity for them. They desired to see these values transmitted to the next generation, understanding that the community's future depended upon them.

Meanwhile the younger generation, experiencing ongoing marginalization, had difficulty understanding the relevance of these values in their current context. Adoption of prosocial values by an older generation did not create equality of opportunity for their parents or grandparents and had not for them. Although younger residents recognized the importance of prosocial values, they did not function adequately in their experience. This gave rise to the clash between the two values orientations.

The rejection of prosocial values by younger residents was enacted in three spheres. First, an oppositional subculture arose in the community where countercultural values came to dominate neighborhood street life. Second, an underground economy developed to combat their limitations from participation in the formal economy. Finally, failure to adopt prosocial values when combined with either or both of the two preceding spheres limited younger residents to the neighborhood in an atmosphere of mistrust for those beyond its borders. Ultimately this clash of

values was key to understanding homicide in Hollygrove as it formed the base for the neighborhood's transition from a working class haven of African American aspirations to one widely perceived to be dangerous and crime-ridden.

Chapter 7: Findings

"Keeping It Real": Life outside Prosocial Values in Hollygrove

The values clashes described in the preceding chapter were not idealistic, philosophical constructs for residents of Hollygrove; they were traversed daily by those who negotiated the neighborhood's complex relationships. Oppositional values manifested themselves in a subculture several young residents termed "Keeping It Real," an environment where those outside the mainstream found refuge. Kirk and Papachristos (2011) defined such a subculture in terms of its cultural orientation; when cynicism toward power structures was high, they found residents were more likely to reject prosocial values and to embrace street subculture. Anderson (1994) described the impact of this values clash in neighborhoods like Hollygrove:

> The rules have been established and are enforced mainly by the street-oriented, but on the streets the distinction between street and decent is often irrelevant; everybody knows that if the rules are violated, there are penalties. Knowledge of the code is thus largely defensive; it is literally necessary for operating in public. Therefore, even though families with a decency orientation are usually opposed to the values of the code, they often reluctantly encourage their children's familiarity with it to enable them to negotiate the inner-city environment (para. 3).

The ability to negotiate between these often conflicting values orientations required both a knowledge of and an ability to enact street savvy. The consequences for deviating from these codes can be difficult, if not lethal, for those living in Hollygrove.

From his shop in Hollygrove Ernest was one who lived between these two worlds. His work screen printing t-shirts saw a booming business for a time from those who wished to memorialize victims murdered in the violence associated with the subculture. He described the interaction of those competing worldviews as "culture killing society" where "society really exists and culture is fabricated." For Ernest society represented mainstream culture, what Anderson (1999) termed Decent Codes, the values of the dominant society that must negotiated

for success outside of Hollygrove. Culture, on the other hand, represented Anderson's Street

Codes and were thought by Ernest to be detrimental to the neighborhood's well-being. He

contended that "the culture that the hood creates totally diminishes it (the neighborhood)."

The street culture of Hollygrove had been popularized in a variety of ways.   One

entrepreneur designed a brand to emblemize it. The 0017th logo, which signifies Hollygrove's

political ward designation, was seen on hats, bandannas, t-shirts and was a popular tattoo to some

residents. The logo featured prominently in a rap video entitled *The Zoo* by Hollygrove Keem

and Jay Jones that could be watched on the 0017th website ([www.0017th.com,](www.0017th.com) n.d.).

Ernest, whose work brought him into frequent contact with the purveyors of the 007th

brand, saw a downside to the brand. For him 'Keeping It Real' glamorized a lifestyle that

limited one's life chances beyond Hollygrove's boundaries. Reflecting on the divide between

the worldview of larger society and the subculture he expressed his concerns

> It's only called being real until the moment when it get real. You see that's fake, that's
> culture, it's culture killing society. Society is real. Society is, you shoot somebody you
> go to jail.

The challenge for those immersed in Hollygrove's subcultural worldview in his words was "you

become the culture," which limits opportunity because:

> you have to deal with society as a whole. I mean you deal with that, that's two different
> worlds. They have no understanding of that because they live their whole life in that
> culture and when they get to the society thing, it depletes them.

Ernest's comments reflected the challenge that residents of Hollygrove faced, they lived between

two worlds, which Ernest termed society and culture.

This chapter is subdivided into five sections. It begins with a description of what life is

like on the streets of Hollygrove, a concept that was described as being 'outchere' or out here in

the subculture. There were three subthemes residents used to explain this, the notion of being

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stuck on the streets with few options, the elements of anger and power that accompany life on the streets, and an understanding of how life on the streets limited one's future prospects. To better understand being 'outchere,' the second section explores the rules that define expectations for those living in the subculture. Those who adopted these rules achieved a certain status, the pinnacle of which was known as being a 'Hood Star,' the subject of a third section. The fourth and fifth sections look more closely at the twin processes of either succumbing or resisting the subculture, a constant challenge that was especially pertinent to the younger residents as they defined their personal identity relative to the subculture.

"Outchere": Life in the Street Subculture of Hollygrove

Bourgois (2003) argued that those who immersed themselves in the street subculture "are seeking an alternative to social marginalization" (p. 143) by refusing to accept structural victimization. The challenge, he noted, is that by doing so "they become the actual agents administering their own destruction and their community's suffering" (p. 143). Efforts to enhance personal status within the subculture served to impair social capital outside the neighborhood. This was reflected in the words of one 20-something male who stated:

> Something real dangerous happened after Katrina, it became cool to be outchere. You gonna hear that word a lot from us. Outchere means in the streets, no guidance, I don't have no guidance, no ambition, I'm just outchere, head first.

His statement described a 'head first' leap into a street life that limited one to the neighborhood's social milieu and thus was considered to be dangerous. This concept was described in three ways throughout the neighborhood. First there was a notion of being stuck, where one's life became increasingly limited to the borders of the neighborhood as one followed the rules of the subculture. Second, anger and power elements of Keeping It Real were a destructive force for

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both individuals and the community. Finally, residents expressed concern that many who were

"outchere" had no future.

Many who abandoned prosocial values and embraced the subculture found themselves

stuck in Hollygrove. One of the 20-something males noted "these dudes, all they know is these

four corners." Dr. T elaborated on this sentiment, adding:

> There are people in Hollygrove that are terrified of leaving Hollygrove. There are kids
> that come to the summer camp that have never left Hollygrove. Talk to them about, hey
> you guys ever been to the movies? Nope. Walmart? Nope. Winn Dixie on Carrollton?
> Nope. Where you shop? Ah, well we go to the corner store. We'll eat at Popeye's. If
> we need something, somebody will bring us some, our family will bring us something to
> Hollygrove so all they know is their neighborhood. All they know is their setting and to
> get outside of there is scary.

Outside of the community the rules were different and those who enforced these rules

were unfamiliar. A single mom who lived in a liminal state between the streets of Hollygrove

and her job outside of the neighborhood told me that Keeping It Real "just works in the hood."

Leaving the neighborhood removed one from the subcultural context where the rules were

known and understood and brought a unique set of dangers. Anderson (2008) found that:

> the reality of daily life for too many young black men in areas of concentrated poverty
> revolves around simply meeting the challenge of 'staying alive.' To avoid being killed as
> they navigate their way in public within the disenfranchised community, they acquire
> personas with a street-toughened edge. This image becomes generalized, supporting the
> negative stereotype that has become a dominant image of the black man throughout white
> society (p. 8).

On the one hand residents faced daily the danger of transgressing turf, or as Charles described

"I've seen people come from the other, from another neighborhood or another part of town, from

across the river or something and come over here and I've seen them get shot." On the other

hand, young residents faced the very real specter of racism and racial violence outside of

Hollygrove. Kobe, a young man from Hollygrove, attended college in a relatively crime-free

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neighborhood in Jackson, Mississippi but felt less safe there than in the higher-crime environs of Hollygrove. He described this fear:

> Cause I mean even when I was here, now that I think about it, I never was really scared about any neighborhood or anybody I knew or anybody from this neighborhood ever gunning me down cause I just, I mean you probably would know me from seeing me around the area but I just never had any issues with anybody so they wouldn't have a reason to. But the Trayvon Martin killing, the white guy, that's probably more of a scarier thing cause I don't have to know him, I don't have to have had any issues with him, you know, he just felt a certain way, acted on it.

As the dangers faced by young black men are bleak both in and outside of Hollygrove some residents like Kobe preferred the known danger rather than an unknown one elsewhere.

Being stuck inside the neighborhood meant one had limited opportunity for recreation and self-improvement. Arianne, a single widow in her late 20s, had lived most of her life in a lethal two block radius between a corner store and a bar. Describing a typical day for many she stated "everybody hung in the store, like on the corner, when the store closed they would go to Big Time Tips." Charles, who like Arianne grew up between the store and the bar, spent a lot of time meandering back and forth between the two and portrayed his day this way, "The bar was closed during the daytime so everybody hung on the corner. When the store close and Snake came to open up, everybody moved from this store or this store around the corner and go to the bar." The shuttering of the bar meant that one recreational opportunity was removed. There was a sentiment among younger residents, reflected through the voice of a community leader, that this was a significant loss to those immersed in the subculture. She stated "even some of those young folks who used to go there and were kind of mad 'cause they didn't have any place to go, they understood. You know it was not like they were really angry, it's just like, but where we going to go now?"

Being stuck in the neighborhood may potentially result in loss of hope and the choice to hang out on the corner, a concept described by Ernest as "Catching the Wall" where "you see these guys by the store when you ride around the neighborhood, and you see around the grocery store and they just standing there, that's guys that literally just gave up and caught the wall." Eldridge also noted, "I notice like there's like a block three blocks down from here and when I get off work there's like always like a group of young men standing on the corner." The possibility that one "Catches the Wall" was exacerbated by an arrest and subsequent conviction record, which further limited opportunity. Tameka explained:

> There are lots of men, especially African-American men, you know, young men, who may have been incarcerated, may have gotten into trouble, they get out of jail, got this record, can't get a job. So I'm back with my mom, you know she's on me because I can't find a job. You know I have kids, can't feed the kids, can't find a job.

One city official implied that getting stuck resulted from the structural limitations faced by those in the community:

> In a city with huge disparities in income, huge disparities in access, huge disparities in lots of different things, you couple that with just developmental markers of young men versus young women and I think it largely answers the question. Certainly not anything that is intrinsic to the young men is that they disproportionately live in poverty and disproportionately are unemployed. It's a lot of that. I mean across the country the disparities for African American men, in particular young African American men, are clear when it comes to the criminal justice system, the education system and the like.

Robert described the impact of these limitations on his life, saying "And it's just that when they took my scholarships away and I went to jail and once I got out of jail I had nothing. I didn't graduate from high school 'cause I wound up going to jail. I had no scholarships now, now what I'm going to do? I ain't qualified to do nothing." Robert was stuck, he was "outchere" with few options and had "Caught the Wall."

Because of the limitations imposed by the choice to adhere to the values of the subculture, one might question why one would make the choice to "Keep It Real." Anderson

(1999) found that negotiating the streets of a neighborhood like Hollygrove required a portrayed image of strength, which he termed "juice," where one "must send the unmistakable, if sometimes subtle, message that one is capable of violence, and possibly mayhem, when the situation requires it, that one can take care of oneself" (p. 72). Prosocial values may be enacted inside the home or beyond the boundaries of the neighborhood in the educational, economic and social worlds of larger society. On the streets of the neighborhood, however, especially those surrendered streets where subcultural values predominate, one must be able to switch codes, largely in an effort for self-preservation.

Bourgois (2010) described the dichotomy between these two cultures as a divide between "cultural capitals" (p. 135) which were differentially expressed between the two worlds that divide the inner city and the world beyond. Thus one must possess a bi-culturalism in order to live in a neighborhood like Hollygrove while also succeeding outside the community, something that became increasingly difficult the more one became invested in the subculture. Keeping It Real was, therefore, a set of power-based survival skills required to be safe within the community but which translated poorly beyond the neighborhood boundaries.

In the previous chapter the use of violence as a problem-solving skill was explored. While older residents deplored this violence, those more immersed in the subculture were more likely to engage it, especially for defensive purposes. Martin, a neighborhood rapper, described an interaction inside a corner store where he was required to shift codes between decent and street codes quickly in response to a slight by another male:

> Like I was at the store today, Belfast and Monroe, I found $5.00 when I came home from my job and I was in a good mood. A woman, she didn't have no money to get her kids nothing, she had maybe $2.00 in the car. I was like, "I'll give you $3.00, matter of fact, what's this for?" She said, "It's for the kids." Like, "I'm a pay for it, get whatever you want for the children, I'm a pay for it." I got a black and mild cause I'm slowing down on the cigarettes. So, he's telling me to hurry up, or whatever, "that's why I don't like

you 'N words' this, that and a third. By me having an anger problem and not being a bigger person, I snapped on him. And next thing you know he said something smart about how, like I'm old enough to take mama jokes, but now my mama's sick, that really hit me to my heart. I turned back around and told him some words, next thing you know he went to grab his gun and cock it back 'cause, you know the clip fall out. Like how you going to handle a gun but your magazine falls out that holds your bullets. Like I told him, next time you pull it, you better use it, I'm not afraid of no pistol, I've got God on my side. You might think I'm scared but I'm not.

Martin began by acting from a decent values mode, sharing his money with a woman in need, but at the perceived slight he shifted codes and violence erupted. Note also that Martin was able to reflect upon his anger, "by me having an anger problem" and his inward clash between personal and subcultural values, "not being a bigger person." His recognition that there may have been prosocial ways of dealing with conflict were rejected as inappropriate in this situation because he did not want to appear frightened.

Kobe saw the divide through a racial lens, commenting "White people, they have like these big, nice looking places and you know they are probably doing well, doing well financially and all that stuff like that, so it's not a lot of reasons to just out and be angry and attack somebody versus out here where you have a lot of anger." His comment reflected a view that financial power shielded one from having to respond with aggression to perceived slights. Both interviewees displayed an understanding of the need to exercise power in response to slights while simultaneously recognizing other operative codes that existed elsewhere.

Others made the connection between power and anger as well. Dr. T noted that the ability to trust was part of the challenge faced by those in the subculture when he stated "where they didn't trust someone or someone was showing violence or aggression towards them [they] reciprocated. They just gave it right back." Daneta described a similar dynamic where her cousin was shot in a power display occurring during a dice game, "They were playing or shooting dice or something and then the guy got mad because he lost the game, you know, and

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then he just like took it out on the boy and started shooting at him and then he, I guess, went to retaliate and then my cousin got shot." Aggression in Hollygrove served a purpose, it let others know that perceived threats to one's person would be met with power. As will be seen later in this chapter, those with the most power became known as Hood Stars.

Displays of power may also become lethal when they escalated to the level of the 'street beef,' an ongoing feud between two members of the subculture. Martin noted, "we get into a fight. From now on whenever I see you it's on and popping, we're beefing. And sometimes that beef escalates to violence." A street beef occurred when two residents had conflict. Unless resolved through other means, something unlikely in the subculture, the beef could progress to lethal violence. Ernest, who printed memorial t-shirts for many of those killed because of street beefs, chronicled the end result of such violence, "So that would be a group of eight guys come in and order shirts one day, and the next week it went to a group of seven, then a group of six, five, till there was none 'cause they was killing each other." This was most intense during a period he entitled The Vacuum, a period at year-end when debts were collected, "the most violent time about November the 15th to January the 5th, I call it the vacuum, people just get sucked up. It's when all the debts get called in." His business in memorial t-shirts would peak during this period, when "60% of the shirts for the whole year for the funeral went down in just those few months."

While enhancing one's personal power, lethal violence associated with the subculture was perceived to have a negative effect upon the life chances of those immersed in it. Four of the study's respondents understood that a distinct challenge of those living "outchere" was a constricted ability to plan for the future. They reflected Anderson's (1993) thinking as he wrote "the ghetto adolescent sees no future to derail, no hope for a tomorrow very different from

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today" (p. 93). A police precinct commander stated it thus "if you have nothing, what do you have to lose" and added "If I thought I would be dead in five years, why would I be planning for retirement?" His comments addressed a hopeless that occurred for those without viable prospects and reflected an understanding of why neighborhood males were not afraid of violence, they had nothing to live for.

Daneta's comments reflected an understanding of this reality. She was a single mother trying to raise her son, whose father had succumbed to the Keeping It Real subculture. She had chosen to break up with him and was now dating another young man who sat on the porch nursing a bullet wound received in a Hollygrove altercation. Her understanding of the future of neighborhood youth reflected the police commander's, "it's just nothing to do here, it's just the same old thing every day," adding "they feel like they don't have anything to live for" and "they have no money every day and they doin' the same thing every day and they parents don't want to do anything so how could you expect them to do, to change?"   She expressed the deep hopelessness that was also reflected in the words of one 20-something male "they out here with no ambitions, they don't know, they not planning for nothing, they don't have no goals in life." Charles explained the thinking of those with no future, saying "their mentality is, you know, I'm going to get everything and get it now because they don't have anything to look forward to." With minimal future options outside of the neighborhood, they are limited to being "outchere" and to live by the rules of Keeping It Real, thus becoming agents of their own destruction.

This Crazy Code of Honor: The Rules of "Keeping It Real"

Life in the Keeping It Real subculture was lived by well-defined rules, what one high-raking police official described as "this crazy code of honor." Anderson (1999) found that these rules "prescribe both proper comportment and the proper way to respond if challenged" (p. 33).

Although most respondents acknowledged that these rules ran counter to prosocial values, residents understood that awareness of the rules were important "in order to enable them to negotiate the inner-city environment" (Anderson, 1999, p. 33). The residents of Hollygrove delineated 14 rules of the Keeping It Real subculture, which were grouped in this section under the categories of Being Hard, Not Snitching on Others, Maintaining Respect, Protecting Turf, and Prohibitions against Violence toward Whites.

Martin and Daneta explained Keeping It Real through two lenses, the street definition and their personal definition. These were excellent examples of how many residents negotiate the complicated interplay of publicly displayed street values and privately held prosocial values. Martin was raised in a family of Jehovah's Witnesses, with a strong, prosocial value-orientation. Although he considered his religion important, his desire to be a rap artist and his occasional forays into drug dealing had led to his involvement in the neighborhood street life something he considered to be a mistake. When asked to describe what it meant to keep it real he responded, "Real, real is mean, you bout yours, this is the street, the street Ebonics term, you real, you bout yours, you follow a code, you don't snitch, you don't break the rules, you ain't gonna let nobody play you or punk you." Martin recognized the codified nature of the subculture and its importance to survival on the streets of Hollygrove. He also expressed the divergence between his personal values and the street's when he added a caveat, "real, to me, my definition, being real, as I said, being yourself, that's the most realest thing you can be, why try to lie, especially to yourself?"

Daneta expressed a similar conflict between the street culture and prosocial values. In this exchange she compared "white folks" values, or prosocial values, as contrasted to the values of the subculture:

D: Like we learn a lot from, well I guess the white folks, I don't want to say it like that but we can learn a lot from them too, you know, because they see things differently versus the way we see stuff. We just want to be real and what's being real? Being real is holding a gun in our hands every day, walking up the street with a stack of money that I made off selling whatever I just sold to a person, you know, but that's not how it's supposed to go. Like that gets you fast money and quick money but as far as when somebody putting a book in front of your face you can't read it. And you know, what's the point in you don't even know, you know, well it's just (pauses)

K: What is, you just mentioned something several other people have mentioned, being real.

` D: Being real

K: What does it mean to be real?

D: Well to us, being real, being real is just, I guess, being hard, you know, like walking with your chest up. That's like being real like having people with fear in their hearts when they see you. That's being real. Well that's their definition of being real versus what real is really is (pauses)

K: Who's definition?

D: to me, being real is a person that's loyal, being true to yourself, knowing, you know, being true to yourself, you know, that's what being real is, being yourself.

As they explained the rules of the subculture both Martin and Daneta presented alternative definitions for Keeping It Real. These ambivalent definitions showed how community residents negotiated between the subcultural and prosocial values, understanding the rules of the community while simultaneously recognizing the primacy of dominant societal definitions.

Both Martin and Daneta also pointed to the importance of being hard or being able to show a calloused, bold exterior to others, the first rules category. Others expressed this rule in terms of violence and gun-ownership. The 20-something males recognized that "you either real or you fake and you got to show that," implying that acts of strength must be enacted in order to prove realness, something they understood to happen when one was "willing to shed blood from somebody" or, as Martin stated, "if you talk like you bout that, make sure you be bout that and you can back it up." Daneta added that backing it up meant "walking around every day with a

gun feeling like they have power over your life," or as she stated in the previous paragraph, "holding a gun in our hands every day." It also meant being willing to use the gun, as the 20-somethings suggested, "being willing to shed blood," or as a former resident now in a politically-appointed office put it "if you interfere with me then therefore, it's better for me to take you out than to talk to you." These younger residents were opining that the subcultural rule of being hard was often accompanied by a weapon and a willingness to use it.

Related to personal toughness was the prohibition against being involved in others' business. In Hollygrove's subculture talking about others' issues, especially to agents of formal control, was tantamount to personal weakness. For Martin strength was shown by being "bout yours," or not getting involved in others' skirmishes, a part of the street code that Anderson (1999) phrased as "see but don't see" (p. 133). This was most prevalent in the rule that snitching or ratting on others was a major subcultural code violation. Ernest, the neighborhood entrepreneur told me that "in this culture nobody's gonna tell." Brandon Aggison's killer, although known to people in the community, was never apprehended because of the prohibition against snitching. This rule was especially challenging for the police department who had difficulty finding information leading to an arrest.

The district commander connected this prohibition to the community's collective efficacy when he contrasted an arrestee's response as opposed to the community's, "it's not the criminals not snitching on each other cause guess what? Once they get caught, you know what they doing? They snitching. It's the citizens that live in the neighborhood that get caught up in that." There was good reason for this; violating the rule resulted in reprisal, often violence against the person who told or their families. The commander noted, "by this crazy code of honor you have to avenge that with some type of violence." Tameka affirmed this statement

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when she stated, "whoever committed the crime is gonna find out and they're gonna come back and get me," as did William when he said "most people that rat are looking to get killed." Residents noted that these threats extended to the family of the informer, causing even more community anxiety. Martin told me that "people still kill people's families because, you know, you rat" and "if they can't kill me they're going to go to the next person that's close to me," while Caroline, whose mother was in prison for murder and whose boyfriend was shot in the head over turf issues, added "someone in the family doing that and they go and be looking for the person and kill 'em all." The threat of retaliation posed a challenge to neighborhood collective efficacy; minding one's business and keeping silent fostered an environment where violence was unchecked.

Failing to mind one's own business was related to the third set of rules in Hollygrove's subculture, don't show disrespect. Kubrin (2005) noted "disrespect can come in a variety of flavors include disrespect by testing or challenging someone, disrespect through victimizing—usually robbing—someone, and disrespect by snitching" (p. 373). One community leader connected the desire for respect to its roots in the nation's history of slavery, connecting it to "taking away black mans' dignity" and unhealed wounds from the past. Others implied it was rooted in shame that came from living in what was considered to be a ghetto neighborhood. Tamesha described coming home from her elite public school with a white classmate and being concerned with what the classmate would think, "I didn't want her to feel like she was going into a bad neighborhood…I kinda avoided saying Hollygrove so she wouldn't feel unsafe." Anderson (1999) writes "Many inner-city young men in particular crave respect to such a degree that they will risk their lives to attain and maintain it" (p. 76). Charles illustrated this by saying residents had to "be very careful with what you say to people, you have to be careful how you

look at people" implying that using the wrong word or wrong look could be interpreted as disrespect and may be met with violence.

Another term for respect was General Principle, or G.P., which Ernest described in the following vignette:

> Guy said he had gotten into a dice game with phony money. And the other guy lost his money, George lost his money. George didn't know whether it was true but some guys on the corner by the store, "Aw, dude took all your money and had fake $100 bills, he didn't even have real money. You gonna let him play you like that George? Huh, bruh?"
>
> "Man, he ain't gonna play me like that, no uh unh, where he at?"
>
> "He around there by his house now." They just bucking him up, just to get some activity stirred up, just for some entertainment. And George took this thing so serious, George went around there, "Man, where my money at, bruh?"
>
> Boy talking about, "What is you talking about?"
>
> "Man, uh uh, you played me out there, you had a phony $100 bill."
>
> And so the boy said, "I ain't got no money, man, go ahead on George, you be tripping." Cause he knew him real good, see him every day, they was born there together, raised up, Dunbar together, you know?
>
> And uh, the boy's grandmother was sitting on the porch, she said, "Oh no, please don't kill my grandson, no, no." And she was saying about he owed a hundred dollars, the lady ran inside and got $200, tried to give it to him. So he had $200. "Please don't kill my grandson."
>
> George turned to that woman and told her, "I'm sorry, I gotta do it. It's G.P."

Ernest's narrative described two respect principles: don't play people, or make them appear foolish and don't mess with others' money, both being reasons to enact G.P.

Charles related a story from his drug dealing days when somebody took his money but didn't give him product in exchange. For Charles to save face in the community he felt compelled to retaliate, "so finally I caught him and when I caught him he went to running and I grabbed him, knocked him down and I pulled a pistol on him" adding "I was going to shoot him too, Kevin, 'cause he had put me in a bad spot." Both Ernest and Charles illustrated the danger

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residents faced when they showed disrespect; dishonor must be met with violence in order to restore the honor lost in the exchange. Langston, a wiry young man who lived equidistant between two neighborhood crime hotspots, summed up the concept by saying "they wanna take your life 'cause they figure if you disrespect them, your life need to be taken."

Respect extended beyond interpersonal boundaries to spatial boundaries and presaged a fourth rule of the subculture: respect for turf. Jenks (2005) defined turf as "sites or spaces wrested from the constraints of capitalism and the dominant order" and "geographical metaphors such as 'turf', 'territory', 'terrain' and 'space' and the boundaries, which enable entry or exclusion, [which] are marked out by language and style" (p. 119). There were two sets of boundaries to be respected in Hollygrove: the neighborhood as a whole and those of individual players who carve out a portion of the community, such as a corner or a block, as their personal turf.

In Hollygrove these contested spaces were prone to violent conflict between parties competing for control of them. The 20-something males described neighborhood turf challenges this way, "Street real is, man we from the 3rd ward, they from the 17th, we don't like them, let's go air it out, that's street real," where airing it out meant shooting. One example of a turf violation was dating women from a ward other than one's own. Charles described a shooting that occurred when young men from another neighborhood attempted to date women from Hollygrove:

> Mainly it was behind a female, it's really pretty much what started it.   But if you in there from another neighborhood messin' with the girls from back here, and then the guys that live back here, they're like, "Well what you doing back here talking to our girls?" That's how they justify it. Shouldn't have been back here, this is not your area, shouldn't be back here at all.

In addition to delineating the neighborhood as turf there were individuals who carved out personal turf inside the neighborhood. Caroline's boyfriend was shot when he returned from jail and tried to re-establish his turf where he was selling drugs. In this exchange she describes his murder:

> C: This was after Katrina. He end up getting shot over drugs. He was selling drugs and end up, he was in jail for a while and came out and went back to the same place. People killed him.
>
> K: Why did they kill him?
>
> C: Over territory, he was going, I guess selling, trying to sell on the same block he was selling at and other people had already took over when he was gone. So he came back and then now you're trying to get your spot back and these totally new people, probably moved in the neighborhood, you know?

Individual turf extends to women as well. Langston related his understanding of this turf rule:

> Like, if you like girls now, people being shot over females, like if you talk to someone girl now. A guy actually got shot in front of a girl from talkin' about a guy girlfriend. Like he was, she was talkin' to him, and the guy was like tryin' to get her number, but she did not tell him that she had a boyfriend. Like the guy just walked up to him, like pulled a gun on him for no reason."

Violations of turf, whether they be ward boundaries, drug sales territory, or women were considered to be personal affronts and thus were to be met with violence to re-establish honor.

A final rule expressed in the data regarded race: don't mess with white people. This rule, perhaps more than the others, helped explain why most homicide in New Orleans was black-on-black in nature. Residents perceived whites to have formal control on their side which meant the consequences for perpetrating interracial violence would be met with greater sanctions. Charles reflected on this disparity as he discussed the roots of the rule, "they still have that mentality the White man that's who, you don't back talk 'em, you do what they say do and if you go along with them you have a better life. You don't buck the system." He saw whites as sources of jobs and money and thus as untouchable. The result, according to one of the community leaders, was

the understanding that "if I go messing with white folks I'm going to be in trouble, I'm going to get caught. They feel like they can shoot somebody on the corner and they have it on video and I might get away with this, though." This rule limited violence to the boundaries of the neighborhood. This finding was consistent with Anderson's (1999) who wrote:

> In the inner-city community there is a generalized belief that the police simply do not care about black people, that when a crime is committed in the black community, little notice will be taken. If a black man shoots another black man, the incident will not be thoroughly investigated. A double standard of justice is thought to exist: on for black people, and one for whites. This distrust is fueled by the lawlessness that is observed on the local streets of the community, most notably in the prevalence of functional crack houses. Residents often note that such people and places would not be allowed to operate in the white community. Such observations reinforce people's belief that they are on their own, and this attitude has crucial implications for the code of the street" (p. 321).

The knowledge that laws were enforced in ways biased toward whites had strong implications for understanding lethal violence in Hollygrove. The prohibition against killing whites played a strong role in limiting murder to the neighborhood.

Being a Hood Star: Status in the Keeping It Real Subculture

As with mainstream society, there were strata within the Keeping It Real subculture. At one end of the spectrum were those who gave grudging respect to the rules of the subculture for the sake of survival on the streets. The opposite pole consisted of what Martin termed "Ultra-vultures" those he described as "hard core exterior, don't have no heart." Ultra-vultures were those who garnered the respect of others in the subculture through exhibitions of strength and violence, what Anderson (1999) termed 'juice'. In the following exchange the 20-something males described the importance of status to those deeply embedded in the Keeping It Real subculture:

M1:   it's always about status

M2:   Oh I just put on, I just put on Instagram, I just put on Instagram, oh, I forgot how I worded it.

M3:   Becoming a Hood Star.

K: Hood Star?

M2:   Hood Star. Meaning you a star in the neighborhood.

M1:   Man you like a basketball player round here.

M2:   Basically when you a hood star it's not just being popular, you like Lil Wayne back here, everybody love you and know you.

The Hood Star was the epitome of popularity something they compared with superstardom akin to Lil Wayne, the nationally-recognized, platinum recording artist from Hollygrove. One of the 20-somethings described the pathway to becoming a Hood Star, "they want to be killers and they want to be gangsters and that, they want to be that because they know they can't be nothing else. And the only way to get status and to be real popular in this city is to do that."   Langston, also in his 20s, thought that a reputation for being a Hood Star must be earned through violence, "The reputation of being dangerous is like I'm tryin' to get my reps up. They tryin' to get they reps up, they're trying to be the big dog in the neighborhood." Daneta connected the violence to power and respect, "once they have that power, the neighborhood gonna respect them." Being a Hood Star, therefore, required garnering power and respect via a reputation for being dangerous.

Rewards were associated with being a Hood Star. The first was a sense of pride, as stated by Kobe who connected personal worth to the ability to survive violence, "the people that I've like, that I've known that have been shot all, like, I don't know, for to me it seems like they got, they gain a sense of pride after being shot." One of the 20-something focus group members connected popularity with women to being a Hood Star, "they [women] only want to mess with the dudes known in the city from killing and robbing people." Others saw financial rewards connected to neighborhood stardom, as one of the 20-somethings explained the perspective to

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me: "I want to get all the money so I could let people know I'm the only one with money and I got that status." Arianne echoed their words, "they trying to hustle and sell drugs and come up and be millionaires."

Becoming a Hood Star, in rare exceptions, could occur without violence. Ernest told me "I was one of the only heads of the hood that wasn't a drug dealer or gangster." He earned his status in the neighborhood by working with the emerging rap artists and their record labels, printing shirts and selling them at their concerts.

Hood Star status was conflicted; some in the community did not recognize it while others competed for it. The power that came from being a Hood Star was not universally accepted as being positive as expressed by Dr. T who told me it is a "false sense of authority." It also came with a cost, an increased likelihood that one would experience lethal violence; Martin noted that such popularity meant their names "will ring a bell, why, because I'm such a hot topic I mean, and I didn't have to say it. Somebody might kill me behind something like that." Many of the elders of the neighborhood thought the power and popularity of Hood Stars was illegitimate, while the younger residents were able to see the limitations of this popularity.

Bourgois (2010), describing the struggle for personal respect of crack dealers in New York, contended they "have not passively accepted their structural victimization. On the contrary, by embroiling themselves in the underground economy and proudly embracing street culture, they are seeking an alternative to their social marginalization" (p. 143). Those limited structurally from advancing in society, whose lives were restricted to the boundaries of Hollygrove, translated their marginality into respect via a reputation for violence. The reputation carried both rewards, women, money, power and status, and concomitant consequences, the increased likelihood that one might lose their live as others strived to replace them. Respect,

therefore, in Hollygrove's Keeping It Real subculture was both a powerful motivating force for those stuck in the neighborhood but also a cause of lethality in the neighborhood.

You Don't Have No Other Way: Succumbing to the Keeping It Real Subculture

The Keeping It Real subculture could be alluring, especially for those with limited options outside of the neighborhood. The push of structural limitations outside of the neighborhood and the pull of the subculture's status within combined to draw those who were marginalized into a position of choosing street versus conventional values. The data addressed three factors leading one to prioritize Keeping It Real over prosocial values: limited options elsewhere, a sympathetic view by those in the neighborhood, and the lack of prosocial mentors who could potentially facilitate other choices.

A former police commander commented upon the options for those in the neighborhood, "I'm 19 years old and I look out in front of me and I don't see a whole lot and when the options come for me to make something hard and fast, I'm gonna do it." This could be intensified by limitations of cultural capital outside the neighborhood, as explained by an official in the Mayor's office:

> Networks only extend so far, so if in a high poverty area you're also less likely to have access to personal transportation, more reliant on public, then most of your life is probably lived in a small geographic area. That said, your network and the individuals with whom you might have conflict probably also going to be in that neighborhood so now it's largely, it's self-perpetuating characteristics of the neighborhood that keep the conflicts.

Limited options and constricted networks were further enhanced by personal fears such as this one as expressed by Daneta, "they feel like, I guess, being successful and opening their minds to other things, they're scared of that, you know?" The neighborhood became a zone of comfort in the face of perceived hostility elsewhere. William noted "once you're in your comfort zone and

you're not getting caught, you're not going to jail but you're having this money so you buy these tennis shoes and impress your friends or your cousins or whoever, I mean you're bound to stick with that code." Bound by limitations and personal fear, some residents found comfort in the street life where the rules were clearer and paths to success were more legible and easily understood.

Many Hollygrove residents understood these realities and expressed sympathy for those entrapped. The 20-something males, conflicted themselves about which set of values to follow, felt a certain kinship with the members of the subculture, suggesting "you from that neighborhood, you can't judge them," and "I grew up with you, like I don't look at you as a bad person." This sympathy extended beyond the youth; Angela, a senior citizen, had a son who was caught in the subculture and explained her understanding of his dilemma this way, "Of course you cared about your family for the most part and your friends cause if one of your friends got something happened, you were there to help fight the battle," a recognition of the alluring camaraderie that existed between those who chose the Keeping It Real subculture. Dr. T also expressed a compassionate understanding of this solidarity as he stated "it's love, it's trust, it's that comradery that they have with their fellow brothers or gang members or whatever."

The fellowship experienced was enticing for those experiencing societal marginalization. Langston shared his desire to be part of the in-group during his adolescence, "So as I was growin' up, that's what—all I wanted to do was to hang out with the older guys—the big, tough, bad guys that was selling drugs." Although Kobe had largely escaped entanglement in the street subculture by leaving the neighborhood to attend a university in Mississippi, he also expressed an understanding of the desire to belong, "they like to look up to the drug dealers or the

gangsters or whoever is around the neighborhood, so if you want to be looked at as cool in their eyes then you gotta, you know, you gotta do the things they do."

Despite the compassionate understanding of those who chose the lifestyle, however, there was still recognition that violence accompanied it, something William acknowledged, "Selling drugs, hanging out, you know [they] wanna be, you know, a part of what's going on. I mean, that's the real reasons, you know, violence takes place." Most people in the neighborhood were bound by the same limitations, resulting in an empathy for those who opt for the Keeping It Real lifestyle. As was seen in the values chapter, however, that understanding did not extend to condoning the accompanying behavioral choices, especially the violence.

William's previous comment led to a third factor pushing some to succumb to the subculture, a dearth of prosocial mentors. Eldridge contrasted the impact of his parents upon his choices with those who lacked positive influences by saying "these young guys, they don't have any guidance." He noted:

> People like always talk about male role models but that really is like a big problem. I mean, you might not think about it, you know, if you had male role models in your life, but if you haven't and you look at those people some of those people their lives are changed because of that. They gonna look up to the next person who happens to be male who might be doing negative things out there. They might be, they might not sell drugs in their face, but you know you might see them pass by in a nice car, they might act a certain way, you know, they might have a certain demeanor about them and then the kids who don't have that in their life they might emulate that and the next thing you know they on the road to doing what that person does and that person might be a drug dealer or a murder or you know anything.

Langston connected the lack of parental guidance with the choice to commit violence:

> Like their dad not in their lives to teach them how to, you know, fist fight or, you know, get along with someone. So now, it's since my dad's not here for me, you not gonna be here on this earth because all I know is guns now. So if I've never been taught how to respect someone, now all I know about is guns 'cause that's what I've been growin' up with these years all my life. So that's what they know about now is just guns.

To Dr. T the lack of prosocial mentors caused the subcultural worldview to become normative, at which point street values were "just kind of ingrained into them like, well this is just how we, just how we supposed to grow up."

Faced with limited options outside the neighborhood, a sympathetic community that understands the realities faced by those in the subculture, and the lack of mentors to create bridges to resources outside of the community, the choice to succumb was understandable. As one's network became increasingly constricted to the neighborhood the draw to the lifestyle of the streets became stronger and one's choices increasingly reflected the available mentors, despite personal views of the primacy of prosocial values. In spite of this attraction, some actively resisted the pull. Such resistance comprises the next section of this chapter.

If You Got Beef, Put It on the Grill: Resisting the Keeping It Real Subculture

Those who resisted the subculture had sources of social capital both within and beyond the neighborhood. Kobe provided an excellent example. Although his family was deeply immersed in the subculture, he refused to succumb, choosing sports, religious life and academia as substitutes. Because of his social skills he was able to use available resources, like his connection to the local community center, to enhance his resistance. In his interview Kobe contrasted the 1960s and 1970s Afrocentric power movement to the Keeping It Real subculture:

> Now that's not even the case anymore, it's like, "Alright, if I don't like this person then I'm gonna shoot him." If I have a problem with you because of something you said to me, because of something you did, I'm gonna take your life. That's like the worst thing you could possibly do to be a black man. I don't know somewhere down the line someone received the wrong information because now it's like no more like a Black Power thing, to stand up together, united, like Dr. King, Million Man March and all that. It's like, "I'll shoot you and kill you," you know? You don't see him as your brother anymore, you see him as someone who's opposed to you. It's so corrupt and negative now that I don't even understand to be honest, it's crazy.

Kobe was able to take a resistive stance, observing the subculture through outside cultural lenses rooted in his enhanced social capital. This allowed him to situate it in light of broader social movements. Others in the neighborhood expressed resistance in three ways: an appreciation for life and prosocial values instilled by family, a future-orientation, and via an understanding of collective efficacy.

Dr. T, a physician, had opportunities to practice medicine within the prison system. His value for life emanated from two sources, his allegiance to the Hippocratic Oath and from his religious training as he pursued a Ph.D. in Theology. He expressed it thus, "you have one life to live, it's an important life, it's the only one you're going to get." Martin, the 20-something rapper, situated his appreciation for life in a family context, "I don't want my mother to bury me and she be in that front pew, shot and killed by a gunshot wound. I want to live." He exhibited ambivalence for the subculture because he had one foot in each world, even making an appearance in the aforementioned music video celebrating the subculture. His ability to express resistance came from his family's influence, something that many felt was an underlying source of strength for resistance.

Charles indicated that resisters needed "someone in their home that would instill in them the belief that you can be anything you wanna be if you excel and push yourself." One way parents did this is by restricting their children's ability to roam the streets of Hollygrove. A community leader noted "they literally keep their kids in the house all day long," and Kobe, reminiscing of his own upbringing, said of his mother, "she doesn't like me walking around the neighborhood doing anything." Others sought ways to remove their kids from the neighborhood entirely, hoping for a safer place to raise them elsewhere. Daneta, a single mother told me, "I don't want to feel like they running us away with this gang violence, but then again it makes you

wanna run away when you have little infants and kids to raise, knowing that they can grow up and, you know, be the way that they are and that's the main reason why I'd rather get my kids out of the neighborhood." Most allowed their children to be active in the community while watching them closely, like one community leader who related his fear for his young, adolescent son:

> I'm concerned about like kids I don't know, like Jerome (name has been changed) is getting to an age where you know he wants to walk up to CVS now and he wants to walk over here to the center and I don't, I let him do it but I tell you it's one of my biggest fears. I mean I know a lot of kids in the neighborhood but I see a lot of kids in the neighborhood that I just don't know. I always see a group of boys that I just never seen before and I'm like what's going to happen to my son walking up, you know, and it could be that wrong group of boys. So I fear it but I still let him go.

Parents who instilled prosocial values were only half of the equation; their children must also decide which code to follow. Eldridge noted, "if we have more people that value a home life, as opposed to a street life, eventually one is gonna outnumber the other." Interviews data demonstrated that parents were actively trying to instill resistance to the subculture in their children through a variety of means, while hoping their children internalized their worldview and appreciation for life.

Many recognized a conflict between the live-for-the moment view of those in the subculture and the ability to envision a positive future. Kobe expressed it this way:

> So initially a lot of kids is going in the wrong direction just because they want to fit in and the other ones, there might be one or two that you might see around the neighborhood, they're uh, just strong, mentally strong, they can understand that, all right if I don't do this something good might happen in the future, so that's how I was, you know? I never wanted to do drugs because I was like, I might not be looked at as like the popular kid or that cool kid in the neighborhood but I could make up for it by whatever comes next.

He chalked up his resistance to mental strength and a willingness to sacrifice short-term status for long-term success. One of the 20-somethings, struggling to emerge from the street

subculture, shared Kobe's view, noting resistance meant "you gotta tell yourself I don't want to be a product of my neighborhood." Martin's future-orientation stemmed from his understanding of the consequences for those who choose the Keeping It Real subculture:

> I actually want a career, I don't want to be one of these people out on the street because everybody want to claim, "Oh, I'm a real member or, I'm a real blank this, I'm a real blank that," like I told you yesterday, man, everybody wants to be this or that, be yourself it gets you farther in the long run. Real niggers, excuse my language once again, don't get that far. Name one real one of them who's either alive right now, they either dead, they either in jail or they dead.

Even those within the subculture, according to two 20-somethings, desired a way out as seen in this interchange:

> M1: and I guarantee, if you would sit out and talk to some of those dudes, I guarantee they want to put their gun down, they just can't.

> M2: Oh, and Mr. Kevin, you really want perspective on violence, go talk to one of those crazy, ignorant dudes who ain't got no hope, ain't got no future, like they'll tell you…

The first of these two voices proposed that even those deeply embedded in the subculture had a desire to leave it while the second voice in the exchange expressed why it is so difficult to choose to resist, the lack of a future-orientation. Given limited prospects outside of the boundaries of the neighborhood, those in the subculture found it difficult to envision a hopeful future, choosing instead to live for the moment.

A third focus of those who resisted was a faith in collective efficacy. As suggested by Kobe's monologue about the unity of the black power movements, some resisters understood the importance of neighborhood unity in light of positive racial consciousness, working together to project a positive view of a black neighborhood. Charles also evoked the black consciousness movements of the past when he stated "this new generation they don't wanna do nothing. I mean they just don't. Martin Luther King must be turning over in his grave, man." These voices noted

the gains made by African Americans which they felt were being undone by the Keeping It Real

subculture. Ernest viewed efficacy through an ecological lens, noting:

> I look at Hollygrove as being stagnated, almost to a point, you know what I'm saying, so
> to where there's literally dying, even though you see progress. I think Hollygrove should
> have, the Hollygrove that I've seen when I was a kid, should be a greater place than what
> it is now. So in order for it to happen like that, somewhere stagnation need to come in
> there and nothing just grew and nothing, the community is a living environment so it's
> either got to be growing or dying.

His solution to stagnation was a series of events in the community where people are taught to

"say no to that culture," via the transmission of prosocial values by community leaders. Martin

viewed efficacy through the lens of the "street beef," a more grassroots perspective adding

"we're all the same hood, we should be united as one and all this beef this, beef that, if you got

beef put it on the grill, you know, because life is too short." The collective efficacy view of

resistance had garnered support as the community experienced an upsurge in social capital in

recent years.   John, a neighborhood senior active in neighborhood improvement efforts, noted,

"misconceptions are only corrected if you put the truth on 'em. So it's gonna take a while, but as

long as we maintain the commitment of the neighborhood, 'cause it took a neighborhood

commitment to get this thing done."   From this perspective resistance could be facilitated when

those who desired a safer community worked together for the well-being of the community,

using collective efficacy to push back the growing involvement of youth in the Keeping It Real

subculture.

Summary

Duneier (1994) wrote "human beings desire to participate in a world that validates their

own images of self-worth" (p. 109). In a society that invalidates those on the economic and

social margins, alternate pathways to self-worth must be created. The "Keeping It Real"

subculture was one of those pathways. Within its rules those who experienced what Wacquant (2008) termed advanced marginality, which resulted from sociospatial isolation and exclusion endemic to advanced capitalism, could climb a social hierarchy to become a Hood Star. The empathic feelings of the community expressed for those in the subculture implied that many were able to understand this reality, even while eschewing the violence and disorganization that accompanied it.

Even those embedded in the Keeping It Real subculture often privately embraced the supremacy of prosocial values. Given the opportunity for economic and social advancement via conventional means, they would choose it. Those who could both learn and exercise the "cultural capital" of Bourgois (2010) or to "code-switch" between prosocial and street values (Anderson, 1999) may be able to appropriate these opportunities, as have Kobe and Tamesha. Those who could not became stuck in the subculture, "outchere," with few options for advancement but through the pathway of the Keeping It Real subculture, may find themselves alienated from others within and without the community who structure their lives around prosocial values.

The conflict within the community between the Keeping It Real subculture and the prosocial values of the old-timers had created a new dialectic in the years since Katrina. Advanced marginality gave rise to a subculture oppositional to prosocial values and provided an alluring alternative for some who experienced exclusion by a dominant society perceived to enforce these values. Yet this subculture was also threatening to those in the community espousing prosocial values, as both its defiance of prosocial values and its practices further isolated Hollygrove, undoing gains made during the Black power movements of the 1960s and 1970s. During the post-Katrina years the community experienced enhanced political and social

capital as resident efforts to rebuild the community embraced the help offered by outsiders: organizations both inside and outside Hollygrove, the City Councilperson, and agents of formal control such as the New Orleans Police Department. The result was a power shift away from the subcultural codes and toward the prosocial values expressed by those opposed to them.   This shift signaled newfound collective efficacy. The resulting empowerment served to reduce legal cynicism and allowed those espousing prosocial values to challenge to the more destructive elements of the subculture. One of the key battlefronts was the violence and disorder associated with drugs, the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 8: Findings

What Prompts People to Kill is Drugs: The Connections between Violence and Drugs

Hollygrove's Keeping It Real subculture and its accompanying violence was considered by many in the study to be closely related to the illicit, underground economy. A major theme running through the interviews with Hollygrove residents was the perception that the use and sale of illegal substances was the major cause of neighborhood violence, especially homicide. Although there were other parts of the underground economy that were not violent, such as lawn care, unlicensed day care providers, and shade tree mechanics, these were not mentioned by residents as causes for neighborhood violence.

At the same time many recognized that the inability to participate in the formal economy drove some into the illicit marketplace. Tameka, an African American homeowner in her mid-40's, expressed these twin sentiments as she considered the cause of neighborhood homicide:

> I think what prompts people to kill is drugs. Poverty, along with that goes unemployment. Sometimes it's just people trying to feed their families, you know, "I gotta rob because I need to feed my kids. I don't have any money, I don't have a job." Sometimes it's a guy on drugs that's trying to get jobs and he doesn't have any money and he doesn't have a job. He can't hold a job 'cause he's on drugs. So he's robbing somebody and in the process he might kill the person because the person either fought back or just happenstance.

Her statement reflected the empathy felt by a middle-class neighbor for those that were 'outchere' struggling against limitations and exercising desperate choices. A dearth of jobs coupled with role models who have achieved success in the illicit economy presented an alternative pathway to financial accomplishment. Despite personal values that proscribed drug-dealing, some saw little alternative to participation in this marketplace.

Wilson (1997) described the urban conditions that pushed some Hollygrove residents into the illicit economy:

Neighborhoods that offer few legitimate employment opportunities, inadequate job information networks, and poor schools lead to the disappearance of work. That is, where jobs are scarce, where people rarely, if ever, have the opportunity to help their friends and neighbors find jobs, and where there is a disruptive or degraded school life purporting to prepare youngsters for eventual participation in the workforce, many people eventually lose their feeling of connectedness to work in the formal economy; they no longer expect work to be a regular, and regulating, force in their lives. In the case of young people, they may grow up in an environment that lacks the idea of work as a central experience of adult life—they have little or no labor-force attachment. These circumstances also increase the likelihood that the residents will rely on illegitimate sources of income, thereby further weakening their attachment to the legitimate labor market (pp. 52-53).

Neighborhoods like Hollygrove developed underground economies to survive when residents lacked skills required to gain and maintain employment in a complex formal economy. Venkatesh (2006), chronicling the economic life of an inner-city Chicago neighborhood, concluded: "The demands of the ghetto require an economy utterly different from what most of America can imagine" (p. 4). The informal economy that he described was a shadow of the formal marketplace with rules and controls that would be largely unrecognizable to those who did not live in neighborhoods like Hollygrove. Those that do harbored mixed feelings toward it, empathy for those that participated and discomfort from the violence that resulted.

Four key themes emerged from the data regarding the interplay of drugs and violence. The first of these delineated the community's understanding of the connections between drugs and violence. The second addressed hotspots for violence which many understood to be alcoholic beverage outlets (ABOs) including bars and corner grocery stores. A third theme tackled the economics of violence and included resident recognition of the necessity of the underground economy and the perceived allure of easy money. The final section concerned participants' views of formal and informal controls in the efforts to reclaim the neighborhood from the violence related to the sale of illegal substances.

It All Started with Drugs: Drug-Related Violence in Hollygrove

On July 30, 2015 a shooting occurred in Hollygrove. Three days later I would interview

Robert who described his interaction with the shooter before it occurred:

> I turned onto Forshey Street and I looked at the dude that did the shooting. I seen him. I haven't seen him in years because he been in New York. He's a longshore seaman in New York. He make good money. He's just down here visiting. I jump out the car. I go, "What's happening? Holler at him, blah, blah, blah. Later on that day or that night, well the next morning, I'm sorry, I see the news. Said there was a shooting on Forshey Street like right where I was at. And I'm looking on Facebook, the dude wanted for it is the dude I jumped out the car and went and hollered at. And they said it was behind $5.00.

Robert would later tell me that, like many of the shootings in the neighborhood, it was drug-

related. The relatively minor debt of $5.00 that led to the shooting was shocking even to Robert,

a veteran of Hollygrove's underground drug economy.

Drug-related violence has been a pervasive feature of life in Hollygrove. Every

interviewee, whether they were public officials, senior citizens or younger males, made this

connection. Most understood it to be the primary cause of homicide in the community.

Furthermore, the violence was not limited to those directly involved in the drug deals. Three

respondents made comments similar to Caroline who said "a bullet ain't got no name on it,"

noting that unintended victims can die when shootings occur. To understand homicide in

Hollygrove one must recognize the role of the illicit economy in neighborhood violence.

A former high-ranking police official, explaining the connection between homicide and

drugs, summed it up this way:

> You can think about it one of three ways. If I'm buying or selling narcotics, I have to protect my business, which can result in violence. If I'm using narcotics, I usually make a lot of poor choices on a lot of levels that can also lead to violence. And if I'm not using it and I want to break in, if I'm not the main guy and I want to break in, then I'm willing to use violence.

Expanding upon this understanding a current district commander echoed the words of Wilson

quoted earlier in the chapter to explain why young black men murder other young black men:

> I think it's if you are a young, a young black man now, and you don't have the job skills, if you've come out of a school system…and if you see that you get involved in this narcotics trade, and that's the easiest way to get money and if you don't have the education, if you're not going to college, if you don't have a trade, if you don't have either one of those things, what kind of job are you gonna do? You gonna be a dishwasher, you gonna be in a minimum-wage job? You gonna be working, you know, some kind of really—those jobs are tough, you know? And you're gonna be working nights, you're gonna be working weekends. I think a lot of times people gravitate away from those jobs and they go for the fast life of narcotic trafficking, and that narcotics trafficking breeds violence.

The absence of livable-wage jobs available to those with limited skills created the necessity for

new economic pathways. As both Tameka and the commander noted, the current economic

climate was anathema to those without proper education or training, forcing the choice to be

destitute or pursue alternative means of income. This gave rise to an informal economy, a

marketplace regulated by the Keeping It Real subculture and its accompanying violence.

Drug-related activity in the neighborhood was cited by most as the main cause of

Hollygrove's reputation as a violent community. Neighborhood seniors, those who lived in the

community before drug-related violence became common, had a perspective on the

neighborhood that predated Hollygrove's violent reputation. During a focus group one

respondent connected drug sales to outsiders entering the community from public housing:

> It all stems back to the problem with drugs. It all started with drugs. Now the homeowners, most homeowners back here are senior citizens, but when like I said, broke up the projects they moved the crime on us. They brought their criminal ways to the neighborhood with them. They recruit the young people in the neighborhood. And then when you can't come up with my money and I got to pay back Mr. So and So's money, that's where the problems started. That's where the crime started…

At the other end of the age spectrum the 20-something males traced Hollygrove's violence to the

1980s and the introduction of crack cocaine to the neighborhood. In this interchange two of them

attempted to explain their understanding of how crack-related violence changed the

neighborhood dynamic:

M1:   That's the beginning of it, they explained to you…

M2:   (interrupting) Once they took crack, once crack cocaine came, it had messed up a lot of black communities.

M1:   The dude explained to you like before this we was doing this and doing that, they was this fighting, then once this got into the neighborhood they started fighting to rob you and that's when people started robbing, started robbing with guns.

M2:   Yeah, you're talking about the crackheads, like, when habits changed, at first when they wanted the drug they might…

M1:   (interrupting) Like in the late 80s, early 90s, that little 10-, 12-year era was when everything just sunk into this…

M2:   If you go up to any black man who's really conscious of the problems that's going on in cities across the world, he's going to name crack cocaine as one of the main reasons.

Highly addictive and relatively inexpensive, crack cocaine played a role in neighborhood

violence, creating a highly lucrative market. Bourgois (2003) addressed the 1980's advent of the

urban crack epidemic by concluding the drug "tapped directly into the entrepreneurial urge that

is such an integral facet of the American Dream" (p. 75). Neighborhoods like Hollygrove, he

noted, were economically and socially marginalized due to "the restructuring of the world

economy by multinational corporations, finance capital, and digital electronic technology, as

well as the exhaustion of social democratic models for public sector intervention on behalf of the

poor" (p. 319) which served to escalate inequality. In this context, concluded Anderson (1999),

"crack has become a seemingly permanent fixture of life, and dealing is a way to earn a living—

even, for a few, to become rich" (p. 121).

        To Eldridge, crack was but a symptom of this neighborhood reality. He noted, "it's not

just that it is crack but it's so many other things, illegal money coming through the neighborhood

and with illegal money comes guns 'cause you have to have guns in order to protect your

money." His comment pointed to an important insight, when formal controls do not support the

neighborhood economy other regulating mechanisms will.

Several of the interviewees had participated in this unregulated marketplace and

possessed insider knowledge important to understanding it. Charles was involved both as an

addict and as a dealer. He described Hollygrove's violence from both perspectives:

> Well gun violence, it devastates wherever it is. But here in Hollygrove the gun violence is just destroying this neighborhood because of the drugs. They know, if you selling drugs nine out of ten you got a gun and if you get caught up in the wrong thing the person, the drug person will shoot you. Or the person that's trying to get drugs, if they got a gun, they gonna try to rob you. If you don't give them what they want, they gonna shoot you. So the gun violence is, is, it's out of control because it adds to the deterioration of the neighborhood. Because the people are worried, either way it goes, if you're selling drugs you're gonna have a gun because you're gonna try and protect yourself, protect your little neighborhood, protect your income. And if you're using drugs you're going to use a gun and go and rob someone to get money to get drugs.

Participation in the sale of drugs, whether as a consumer or as a provider, brought the possibility

of lethal violence. Those selling experienced an even greater likelihood of violence because of

competition. When asked what motivated homicides in the neighborhood Martin responded

from his perspective as a dealer:

> You selling $20 grams and you making money. Off an ounce of, off an ounce of good weed, like purple, could make you like 5-something. So you booming off that. They see you steadily got clientele coming and you showing the love and they like, "This dude got such and such and such and such. He doing this, that and a third," you know, "Let's go get him." And what you really isn't learning, you might find two ounces of weed, some mags and maybe eight or nine ounces in a stack, a stack is a thousand. Other than that you done killed somebody right behind something petty, you know, and at the end of the day is it worth it?

Those who experience extraordinary success in the marketplace became Hood Stars and faced

greater scrutiny by others competing to replace them. Martin's comments argued that what

appears to be success could be illusory, part of the image portrayed by those working to rise in

the social strata of the Keeping It Real subculture. Even the illusion of success invited potential

lethal violence. Anderson (1999) referred to this type of subcultural social capital as 'juice' and

proposed that it was enhanced when one was "capable of violence" (p. 72) which was

communicated via "facial expressions, gait and direct talk" (p. 73) and required "constant

vigilance…against giving even the impression that transgressions will not be tolerated" (p. 75).

This violence had spillover effects for community members who chose not to participate.

Violence served to impair the neighborhood's collective efficacy in two ways: first as neighbors

retrenched from community life and later as individuals and businesses abandoned the

community. Retrenchment accompanied fear that the street violence may extend to oneself upon

violating the Keeping It Real rule of minding one's business. Arianne, in the following

exchange, described this fear:

> A: the police used to come around all the time and give them fines and citations not to hang on that porch and they're still there. The porch gone, now they just stand on the corner.
>
> K: Chasing people away, but that didn't really work. What other ideas do you have?
>
> A: That's about it, maybe we could get the police to stand out there all day and run 'em.
>
> K: Constant police presence. Beside the police, other things that could be done? Things that average people could do.
>
> A: Nothing that I know of, you can't go out and tell them to get off the corner.
>
> K: Because?
>
> A: They might shoot you.

Her remarks reflected the feeling of many in the study who thought that only formal controls

were sufficiently powerful to curtail drug-related violence as informal exercises of control may

invite lethal retaliation. In an atmosphere of legal cynicism, however, the police were not trusted

and residents were left to fend for themselves. In this scenario the choices were few: retreat from public spaces or abandon the neighborhood altogether. Such retrenchment may have emboldened those in the underground economy.

Some decided to abandon the community altogether, seeking a less-violent neighborhood. Charles recalled a time when the neighborhood was ethnically mixed and explained the white-flight phenomenon through the lens of drugs and violence:

> It used to be pretty much mixed. But now it's predominately black. They used to have black and white people back here but it got so bad with the drugs and the, the dog-eat-dog mentality that people moved away. 'Cause I guess they didn't want to be in that type of environment 'cause that tends to put you in the frame of mind that you always on the defense, you know, you always watching yourself.

This statement managed to capture both the retrenchment, "on the defense" and "always watching," and the subsequent neighborhood abandonment by whites. Others moved after a member of their family became involved in the illicit economy inviting potential for retaliation, as did Caroline who said "I have a family member that's in the neighborhood that actually does some things, he does crime or drugs, so I prefer not to be in the neighborhood because of that." When asked to clarify what she meant, Caroline elaborated, "if they want to go after this person that's doing all this crime or whatever, they want to go after the family members also." The fear she experienced was not the generalized fear of the whites who left, but fear based upon serious potential for lethal violence individually directed toward her. Angela's family did experience such retaliation; their neighborhood business, an ABO, was firebombed and burned to the ground. She connected the arson to a neighborhood drug dealer who thought her mother, the owner of the ABO, had informed the police about their activity:

> And they got upset with Mama, 'cause Mama would always come out, I guess sometimes during their busier period, and of course she'd make comments under her breath. Well it ended up with them believing Mama was gonna call the police on them, and they got tired of what they called "that old…" and they had closed up the bar, they had gone in the

thing, and they threw a bottle. Mama heard a crack of a bottle and inside the thing but nothing exploded. And then, maybe an hour later, she started smelling smoke, she and Ricky, and they got up and went outside and saw smoke coming out of the garage. And it ended up with the whole, everything burning down, you know?

Her mother would later decide not to rebuild, thus abandoning her business.

Mirroring the retrenchment and abandonment just described, there was a sentiment by many that the city itself had abandoned the community too, leaving it to fend for itself. From her office in City Hall one government official described Hollygrove's abandonment from a birds-eye perspective:

> But what it looks like to me is that poor communities have fewer services, less support, fewer options—I mean, in terms of even trying, if you live in one of these communities and you are low-income and you don't have a vehicle, your options for jobs are incredibly limited because of the lack of good transportation. And so all of that I think leads to, you get less service from the city, and there's less opportunity and more opportunity to, I mean more, you know, criminal behavior becomes more of an options because it will give you money.

One resident, a senior homeowner who lived in the neighborhood for 45 years, described this in similar fashion:

> But it was the idea of the thing that how can someone that's over these things let, you know, this happen by not workin' on it? You know what I'm sayin'? So it's like something's wrong with this picture, and again it goes back to bein' unfair because in this neighborhood that should not be happenin'. This should not be happenin'. So when you really look back on life, in a lotta different ways it's like why certain areas are being flooded? Why are certain areas not bein' taken care of in a lot of different ways? With the crime and the drugs and all of this stuff, you know? And I feel that it's drivin' the people out. They wanna drive the people out.

Her comments reflected the deep mistrust that many in the community experienced with regard to the city. Some saw their abandonment as conspiracies directed against the neighborhood. These included: drugs being intentionally foisted upon the community to profit wealthy residents of other neighborhoods, guns being imported by profiteers while agents of formal control turned a blind eye, and poor police response to neighborhood violence which was thought to be a

strategy to limit it to the neighborhood and keep it away from others. The mistrust they expressed resulted from their long history of structural marginalization and abandonment.

Both inside and outside the community Hollygrove's reputation for drug-related violence had impacted the perceptions of the community. The rise of Hollygrove's illicit economy was widely thought to account for most of the lethal violence in the neighborhood, even by drug dealers. The fear of this violence led to retrenchment and abandonment by individuals, businesses and the city. The subsequent void produced an environment in which the illicit marketplace could flourish. Venkatesh (2006) wrote "the underground enables poor communities to survive but can lead to their alienation from the wider world. For groups and organizations, as well as individuals, surviving in the ghetto via shady means can result in their overall remove from the city. It is a pernicious cycle" (p. 385). These words aptly described the vicious cycle experienced by those in the study, and formed the basis of the neighborhood's understanding of "why" violent crime occurred. Equally important, however, was "where" it happened, at specific crime hotspots in Hollygrove.

Only When the Store is Open: ABOs and Violent Crime in Hollygrove

Although Hollygrove had the reputation as a dangerous neighborhood to those inside and outside the community, residents recognized that most violent crime was limited to microlocations within the community. In a 2009 survey conducted by the Policy & Research Group and commissioned by AARP, residents were asked to identify corners they would avoid because they felt safe or unsafe. The five worst corners were all associated with alcoholic beverage outlets (ABOs). In the words of the 20-something males, "every corner where's there's a corner store is nine times out of ten dangerous." The location considered unsafe by most

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residents was a two-block section in the middle of the community where both a bar, Big Time Tips, and a corner store, the Olive Superette, were located.

St. Jean's (2007) research addressed a limitation of macrosociological studies that compared dangerous neighborhoods. He noted that crime was differentially distributed throughout these neighborhoods, some locations inside the community experienced higher crime than others. His study found that "both street drug dealers and robbers in the research site are primarily attracted to locations with businesses such as liquor stores, grocery stores, check-cashing outlets, and fast food restaurants" (p. 5) located near prominent intersections. Those living in Hollygrove understood corner stores and bars to be the most dangerous places in the community.

The Olive Superette was a corner store located at the corner of Olive and General Ogden Streets. Two blocks away, at the corner of Eagle and Edinburgh Streets, sat Big Time Tips until its closure. Two other ABOs were once located on these blocks as well, Morris Lounge which was torched by a drug dealer in retaliation for calling attention to his activities, and the Edinburgh Market which wasn't re-opened after Katrina. These were spaces understood to belong to neighborhood drug dealers. One of the seniors provided this historical perspective:

> The corner store right there on Edinburgh and General Ogden, that's where they young people, when I first moved back here in '94, the winos used to sit across the store and they could drink their wine and have conversations, 'cause I was inside the house and I could hear them going around the world and back every day, every day. Well then the young people started so I didn't see them anymore. So A&P was still in the shopping center, so when I went there I saw them sitting on the car, I said, "Y'all don't be on the corner anymore?" He said, "No, ma'am, no ma'am, we winos, we ain't no drug dealers and we ain't no drug users, we can't handle young people so we just moved on out and let them have it." And that's when a lot of the disruption started coming into focus.

The two-block section was identified in both this study and the *Livable Communities Survey* as the most dangerous in the community.

Arianne, Robert and Charles lived on those blocks and experienced violence they connected to this specific location. Arianne described the flow of people between the two ABOs, "Everybody that hung in the store, like on the corner, when the store closed they would go to Big Time Tips." She describes a shooting in Big Time Tips the day of her cousin's funeral, a killing which had taken place in Hollygrove:

> I was eighteen I think, it was the day of my cousin's funeral, he had got killed by the duplex and we was around there celebrating for him and two boys had, I guess they had been fussing earlier that day or whatever and one of those boys came in there and he pointed the gun in there and started shooting. And he would, the person he was shooting at was like in the back by the pool table. And he came outside and shooting at him and they was running back and forth in the barroom shooting at each other. And the one that was already in there, he had got killed and they dragged him from the back of the bar to the front of the bar.

Robert lived across the street from Tips. A former drug dealer, he would spend his days at the corner stores selling drugs and then continue into the evening inside the bar, "The bar was closed during the daytime so everyone hung on the corner. When the store closed and Snake came open up, everybody moved from this store or this store around the corner and go to the bar." He recalled the history of the ABO across several owners until its closure:

> In the beginning it was bad, when Big Time Tips used to be called Ghost Town. The guy, well he passed away not, Eli used to own it. It was called Ghost Town and Ghost used to be throwing a lot of concerts down there and it was, that's when it started to get shaky back there, you know what I'm saying? Just shootings and all that shit right there by the bar and it closed down for a minute. Then this guy, a little guy bought the bar, Bo Lee. He bought it and opened it up and called it Big Time Tips. And he had a little hookup with Q93 (a primarily African American radio station), so every Wednesday night Q93 be out there and then everybody just shooting, went and started it again. Bo Lee got incarcerated. Then Snake bought it and that's when it just got horrible cut, you know, Snake was a good man, you heard? Snake used to look out for people in the neighborhood. If you needed money, he was a loan shark. He'd loan you some money, just make sure you bring him his money. He was a good dude, but around that time these little youngsters, like I said, they just want to hang in front the bar and they get mad when Snake call the police. People getting shot all under the house next door, you know what I'm saying? Man I can't count how many people got killed inside that bar, while I was in there.

Charles, also a former drug dealer, lived across from the now-closed Edinburgh corner store and one block from Big Time Tips. About 20 years older than Arianne and Robert, he considered the closure of Tips and the corner store to be catalytic in ending some of the drug-related violence in Hollygrove:

> Well, now Hollygrove is kinda like, like it has cleaned up since the hurricane. Since the hurricane a lot of riff raff and the druggin' and the drug suppliers, they're not here now. Hollygrove was a hub, they would come from across the river, they would come from all over and they would come to Hollygrove and get drugs but since the hurricane that has slowed down a whole lot. Slowed down quite a lot. The homeowners is kinda getting back in control thanks to you and Joe Sherman and the other activists in the neighborhood that got sick and tired of this stuff. They been sick and tired of it but, excuse me, didn't do anything about it. I'm so glad that store across the street is closed. I am glad, Kevin, I'm so glad that place down there, Big Time Tips is closed. That stopped a whole lotta stuff man, just those two spots stopped a whole lot of chaos in the neighborhood. Right now up on that corner where the grocery store is, that, for some reason, and I never saw this in California, but for some reason these neighborhood grocery stores they attract the wrong type of people. They attract people that are just non-productive, they are maybe down on their luck, drugs, you know that's where, once you see a grocery store and they hang out, you know that's where you can come and get drugs, at least find out where to get drugs. So if they close Henry [Olive Superette], 'cause Henry was complaining to me this morning said he's sick of back here. If they close Henry down the neighborhood is gonna improve greatly 'cause there's not gonna be a centralized location for you to come buy drugs.

These three respondents echoed the findings of St. Jean that violence was located primarily at sites where people gathered and was not evenly distributed throughout the community. Drug-related activity occurred at all hours, during the day at the corner stores and during the night at the bars.

On two occasions neighborhood residents were able to temporarily pressure the New Orleans Alcoholic Beverage Control Board to rescind the liquor license of Big Time Tips only to see it re-open after making changes. After Katrina the residents worked with the City Councilperson and the New Orleans Police Department to permanently close the bar, restricting a prominent location for drug-related activity and substantially reducing the drug-related

violence described by Arianne, Robert, and Charles. A high-ranking police officer provided an outside perspective on the closure:

> The violence was already really slipping down already, and I really credit the violence slipping with the great network in the neighborhood of really, you know, drivin' some of that stuff out. And then we came back with the icing on the cake of getting rid of Big Time Tips, which was kinda like the last anchor spot back there. You know, you have to get rid of anchor spots. So we knocked off the anchor spot, which was our plan, and then we came back in with that organized-crime Rico investigation, swept the last major gang problem out of the area. And now what you have left is just some residual hanger-ons that may be not even anchored there but come back there 'cause that's the historical base. Then we try to attack them as they come in. But I don't even, you know, police love to take credit for things when they go right, and when they go wrong we love to blame other people, you know. But what I would say—and I've said this publicly—is that I attribute at least half of the success we've had in Hollygrove, not to us, but to the great work of the community.

These ABOs were microlocations within Hollygrove, or what the police official termed anchors, and served as gathering places in the neighborhood. Such locations were attractive to drug dealers because they drew a specific clientele (St. Jean, 2007). The closure of Big Time Tips, accompanied by the loss of Morris Lounge and the Edinburgh corner store, left only the Olive Superette as a gathering place, decreasing the appeal of the location as a crime hotspot. The result was a drop in violent crime in this location and a greater perceived sense of safety by residents.

Violent crime was rooted in specific places; in Hollygrove these were places where alcoholic beverages were sold. Not all places within the neighborhood were equally dangerous. Because macro-perspectives consider neighborhoods safe or dangerous based upon gross violent crime statistics, they had limited power to explain violence at specific locations inside the neighborhood.

Location alone was not sufficient to explain lethal violence in the community, however. Equally important to the understanding of the phenomenon were the economic considerations

that undergirded the illicit economy and made it a viable alternative to participation in the formal economy. This is the subject of the next section.

Their Only Funds Was to Sell Drugs: Economic Consideration of Drug-Related Violence

Hollygrove's drug-related violence was rooted in places but it was also rooted in a larger structural context. Wilson (1997) connected it to a neighborhood's internal organization, concluding "The presence of high levels of drug activity in a neighborhood is indicative of problems of social organization. High rates of joblessness triggered other problems in the neighborhood that adversely affected social organization, including drug trafficking, crime, and gang violence" (p. 59). Structural limitations faced by Hollygrove residents were similar to many African American neighborhoods in New Orleans, noted one city official, including "an unemployment rate that is like twice the city's average, a level of high school attainment that is half the city's average and average incomes that are like 40% lower than the city's average." These factors were understood to drive the impoverishment of neighborhoods like Hollygrove and gave rise to the participation in the illicit economy and its accompanying violence. In words similar to Wilson's the official concluded "concentrated poverty begets other issues…their access to numerous things is different, their access to education, their access to transportation, their access to jobs is different, and that has an adverse effect." Charles summarized it this way 'they were economically impoverished so their only funds was to sell drugs." In a neighborhood structured by poverty the underground economy may become a viable source of income for those limited from participation in the formal economy.

Those participating in the study had two views regarding the sale of drugs in the community, sometimes expressed simultaneously. Most understood drug dealing to be an

economic necessity for those unable to earn a livable wage in the formal economy. At the same time there was a strong sense that their participation in this part of the illicit economy was destructive to those involved and to the community as a whole.

As noted earlier, most in Hollygrove personally subscribed to prosocial values, even those who participated in the sale of drugs. Unable to find livable-wage jobs in the formal economy many succumbed to selling drugs in the neighborhood even though this violated their personal values. Martin described this phenomenon from his perspective: "Like, like, alright I done changed my life around so many times but I can't lie, the Devil keeps sucking me back in sometimes and I don't want to go. I hate, I hate, like I said yesterday, I hate the person I become because I'm not that person." Martin's involvement in the drug-related economy caused dissonance, he both hated his choice to sell drugs but felt he had no other viable options. One of the 20-something males described this dilemma:

> It's like man, I want to be a painter but I don't know nobody who paint. Nobody come up to me and say, hey that's cool like. Where everybody around here selling drugs, though, that's cool, let me go sell some drugs. And that might be one of the reasons, another reason might be that every day you walk out your house, you ain't got no money in your pocket, but that guy do. He got a car and a house. And he not even a bad person, he's just selling drugs to take care of his family, so you start to look at it from that perspective, like. You're not looking at it like, oh I'm messing somebody's life up and I could possibly go to jail, all you thinking about is providing for your family, making sure you survive every day.

While recognizing that there are personal and societal ramifications that follow the choice to deal drugs, he saw few legitimate options. Given the lack of viable opportunity in the legal job market he resolved the dissonance by separating an action he considered to be immoral, dealing drugs, from the quality of the person, "selling drugs to take care of his family." The indignity of not being able to find good work was resolved by the dignity of caring for one's family despite the clash of values that accompanied it.

A former police official described well the desperate situation faced by many in the community, "they're poor, disorganized families for the most part. Lots of young men going nowhere fast, unfortunately for a lot of reasons: didn't get an education, they got arrested early and often in their life and kind of left them fewer options." The options that were available were often fast food or service-sector jobs which did not compare to the money that could be made in the illicit economy. This was undignified and demeaning work, contended one of the 20-something males and was not worth the effort compared to the alternative:

> Nine times out of ten you bout to quit that job because you not making enough money. You go stand on the corner you could make a week's pay, that one day standing out there. Once you see that you like, shit, I ain't going back to work. I ain't worried about nobody else hiring me. If I could, if I sit out here for a week I could probably make like $1,000. I sit out here for another week I could make $2,000, like, it's just that simple.

Participation in the illicit economy also brought the very real possibility of arrest and felony conviction, requiring the potential job applicant to admit to a prior conviction, further lessening the chances of finding legitimate employment. Kobe noted "the drug dealers or the people who have been in jail multiple times on different offenses and stuff, they can't really get a good job because of the way things are set up." His comment reflected a core tenet of Institutional Anomie Theory; barring legitimate means to success attainment people will turn to illegitimate means.

Despite the potential consequences, participation in the sale of drugs was thought to be driven by economic necessity, and thus became a viable pathway to economic attainment in the face of structural limitation. One official in the Mayor's office noted:

> I suspect that the violence that often accompanies other criminal activity would be lessened if people were not engaging in the criminal activity that was largely then driven by economics; so if you're not selling drugs then there's less chance of you being involved in much of the violence that comes along with it. And the selling of drugs really is what comes from pursuing an economic opportunity that they view as a viable one.

Hollygrove was ringed by fast food outlets, the main source of jobs for those without skills, training or adequate transportation, but these were low-wage jobs with minimal benefits. In addition to low wages, fast food and service sector work was associated with low status. The 20-something males thought that participation in the underground economy brought both higher pay and improved status. In the following interchange the 20-something males described their perceptions of higher pay and social status made possible by selling drugs on the street:

M1:   Why get a job if I know this dude don't want to hire me? Gonna put me in the back to wash dishes for $7.50.

M2:   Yeah, why break my back for this much money, make this much illegally?

M1:   You could work six hours probably, nine times out of ten you work in a fast food restaurant. Start out with probably eight hours, after a couple of months you be down to six or five, you broke after that.

M3:   Racial profiling is at your job.

M1:   You 'bout to quit.

M2:   They give you all these rewards just to keep you there for a while. Sucks you in, it's like they set up on you so that you can't leave.

M3:   This is truthful stuff, like.

M2:   This is a real subject.

M1:   Nine times out of ten you 'bout to quit that job because you not making enough money. Gou go stand on the corner you could make a week's pay, that one day, standing out there.

M3:   Couple of hours.

M1:   Once you see that

M2:   You hooked.

M1:   You like, shit, I ain't going back to work, I ain't worried about nobody else hiring me. If I could, if I sit out here for a week I could probably make like $1,000. I sit out here another week I could make $2,000, like, it's just that simple.

M3:   Son, and then, once you really get up there, you could make $1,000 a day, that's when you really don't want to leave.

M1:   Now those dudes knowing they…

M2:   They done spoiled themselves to it…

M1:   …literally, really making more money than that guy that didn't want to hire him.

M2:   And after that they're not looking back, a job is nothing to them now.

M3:   A job is obsolete to them.

Their perceptions of available options were key to understanding the realities faced by many in Hollygrove's underclass. Available jobs in the legal economy were perceived to be accompanied by low wages, hard work, insufficient hours, racism and lack of control over one's situation. In contrast the illicit economy afforded higher pay, easier working conditions and the dignity of knowing they could make more than the boss who dictated the poor working conditions in the formal marketplace. While prosocial values eschewed the illicit economy, those observing the challenges that many in Hollygrove faced could understand its value for those without options in the formal economy and thus perceived it to have legitimacy.

At the same time there was a strong sentiment widely shared by most in the study that this alternative economy was destructive to individuals involved and to the community as a whole. Most in Hollygrove ascribed to the value of hard work and delayed gratification. The fast and easy money that accompanied the drug-market were thought to be an illegitimate substitute for a longer-term perspective which prioritized success via sanctioned pathways. Charles summed these understandings:

> I was raised to have a different mindset from the people that I see back here now. The older people that were here 30, 40, 50 years ago, they were raised to get up and got to work, and if you don't go to work, go to school, and if you don't go to school, go into the

military. They were raised to be productive with their life, do something with their life, don't just lay around.

He highlighted three pathways for deferred accomplishment: jobs, education, and the military. The increasing complexity of the job market often requires an education beyond high school. A career in the military required one to complete high school. Thus education, at least to high school graduation, was key to success in the formal marketplace. Louisiana's public schools ranked 44th in the nation (Editorial Projects in Education, 2015) and Orleans Parish Schools underperformed 62.5% of them (Sims & Rossmeier, 2015). The educational pathways leading to jobs in the formal economy or the military were difficult for students attending schools ranked among the worst in the nation.

Some observed that the impact of poor quality schools began early in one's academic career and then continued to negatively influence opportunity throughout the lifespan. One governmental official raised in the community thought this realization began as early as junior high:

> But there aren't that many opportunities out there. Why? Because you need to be able to read and write. And guess what? Tom and Jane don't want to read and write because Tom and Jane decided that when they got to junior high school they did better selling crack on the corner than going to school. So now all the time and all Jane knows is to either sell crack or sell themselves. And so now they in that spiral of crime and that's what happens.

The choice of more immediate rewards of the underground economy, thought to emerge at an early age, then had repercussions throughout one's life. Arianne addressed her perception of the long-term consequences of this decision, stating "they be starting young, like 17 or 16 selling drugs and they'll do it like till they're 40 or 50 and don't have no money and still living in Hollygrove, they ain't got no car, they be riding around on the bike." In additions to the impaired long-term prospects that she highlighted, others recognized the negative impacts of the

illic economy on Hollygrove's reputation, as expressed by William, "I guess they figured selling drugs is the way out, but selling drugs is not good for the community."

While the illicit economy appeared to be a viable path to economic security, it had a significant downside. On one side of the ledger was the myth that drug sales were lucrative. Bourgois (2010) found that while "dealers tend to brag to outsiders and to themselves about how much money they make each night…their income is almost never as consistently high as they report it to be" (p. 91). According to his calculations drug dealers made "slightly less than double the minimum wage" (p. 92). On the other side of the ledger were the costs of participation. As Arianne and Wilson both noted, the long-term prospects were grim. For Wilson the choice brought increasing marginality as job-related prospects were diminished via loss of skills and connections to the workforce, while for Arianne it limited one to economic marginality and relegation to a peripheral existence in the neighborhood. The possibility of lethal violence was also enhanced, especially as one progressed through the hierarchy toward Hood Star status. Finally, the illegal nature of the marketplace carried with it the possibility that dealers would come to the attention of both formal and informal controls, the subject of this chapter's final section.

More like an Occupying Force: Formal and Informal Controls in Hollygrove

Hollygrove residents expressed mixed feelings toward the police. At the time of Brandon Aggison's death there was widespread distrust of the NOPD. The police exhibited disdain for the community. Moore (2010) noted that "the NOPD had a distinct institutional culture that emphasized an 'us versus them' attitude toward the communities in which they served," one "infused with obvious anti-black attitudes and feelings" (p.7). The environment of mutual

hostility and distrust fostered an environment in which both the subculture and the underground economy could thrive. Moore (2010) wrote "although black residents wanted the drugs out of their community, they wanted the police out as well" (p. 209). In their marginalized condition residents had to choose between the worst of two ills affecting their neighborhood.

After Katrina, Hollygrove's attitudes toward the police appeared to change. In May of 2007, AARP selected Hollygrove as a pilot neighborhood for their Livable Communities project. An initial phase of the project was an eight-week leadership training course during which residents began to identify key issues of concern to the community. One of the four areas these leaders desired to address was violent crime. Deeply impacted by Katrina in August, 2005, these leaders were primarily homeowners with deep ties in the community that led them to return from evacuation earlier than others. Many of them were elderly, which was a key selling point for AARP. All of them were in some phase of rebuilding their homes and lives, and were united in a desire to see the community rebuilt better, safer than before the storm. The training proved to be a major turning point in the community's differentiation between crime prevention and law enforcement.

Prior to the training, the community was heavily focused on police response times, the need for a police substation, why the police had not addressed the pre-Katrina practice of open drug sales on street corners, and the issue of racial profiling. A deeply frustrated community experienced the police force as their adversaries and felt vulnerable in a community that had become notorious for violent crime. The Second District of the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) was frequently stonewalled in their attempts to solve the crimes by a community deeply distrustful of them. A police official described the relationship at the time, "we were probably more perceived as an occupying army than people back there trying to help."

As the community's view of crime shifted from police-centered and reactionary, to community-centered and preventative, a simultaneous shift in their view of the police began to occur. The police became community partners, willing to work cooperatively in a variety of ways, even to the point of having their ideas of effective crime prevention challenged upon occasion and to provide a representative at the community crime meetings. This change marked a turning point from attitudes of mistrust and cynicism toward formal control agents, to cooperation and empowerment. It also marked a dramatic change of attitude for those that previously considered themselves victims of Hollygrove's drug wars.

Alexander (2012) contended that the War on Drugs in America had been differentially waged in African American neighborhoods like Hollygrove.

> From the outset, the drug war could have been waged primarily in overwhelmingly white suburbs or on college campuses. SWAT teams could have rappelled from helicopters in gate suburban communities and raided the homes of high school lacrosse players known for hosting coke and ecstasy parties after their games. The police could have seized televisions, furniture, and cash from fraternity houses based on an anonymous tip that a few joints or a stash of cocaine could be found hidden in someone's dresser drawer. Suburban homemakers could have been placed under surveillance and subjected to undercover operations designed to catch them violating laws regulating the use and sale of prescription "uppers." All of this could have happened as a matter of routine in white communities, but it did not.
> Instead, when police go looking for drugs, they look in the 'hood. Tactics that would be political suicide in an upscale white suburb are not even newsworthy in poor black and brown communities. So long as mass drug arrests are concentrated in impoverished urban areas, police chiefs have little reason to fear a political backlash, no matter how aggressive and warlike the efforts may be (p. 124).

While those engaged in the sale of drugs recognized this as a negative side-effect of their career pathway, law-abiding residents were also victims. Innocent residents were caught in what a former police chief termed "dragnet mode," where a community pastor was pulled over for an inoperative turn signal, one of the 20-somethings was searched for wearing a white t-shirt and having dreadlocks, and this researcher was patted down for talking to a neighborhood friend.

The result was that residents did not view agents of formal control as allies but rather as an occupying force.

One of the neighborhood seniors active in the Livable Communities Project, recalled a time before the alliance with the NOPD as a period when "our police department wasn't worth shit 'cause they had a whole bunch of crooks in the police department. They had a whole bunch of rednecks in the police department." Some, like Daneta, thought the NOPD had misplaced priorities, "I mean they're out giving tickets every day, but where y'all really need to be is where people getting hurt." Others, like Kobe, cast the police assigned to the neighborhood in a nefarious light, "Hollygrove doesn't have, I guess you would say, cops who, who would uh, who pretty much aren't corrupt I would say, who aren't just randomly stopping people or some of the cops might even be in drug gangs or you know, stuff like that." Innocent bystanders caught up in the dragnet mode became angry and oppositional, as did one of the 20-somethings who said, "they don't care about me, f them too." In this climate formal control agents were seen as the enemy, rather than allies seeking to enhance public safety. Mistrust of the police stymied efforts to interdict participants in the illicit economy with the result of enhancing the likelihood that the sale of drugs and its accompanying violence could flourish.

In recent years the NOPD recognized this dynamic and made efforts to engage the community. A former police chief commented on this change:

> If you tie yourself closely to what a community is, they'll tell you what their quality of life problems are. And if you're willing to turn that decision over to the neighborhood, which is essentially community policing at some level, then whatever it is you choose to enforce with the neighborhood support, you're never gonna run into a problem. You're not going to run into the neighborhood turning against you. You won't be perceived as an occupying force.

Starting in 2009, when the Hollygrove Livable Communities Project was introduced, the NOPD began engaging the community in a purposeful way: attending community meetings,

implementing an anonymous crime-reporting hot sheet, and developing relationships with community leaders. John, the senior community activist who called policemen crooks and rednecks, changed his perspective in response. When asked how to make the neighborhood safe he remarked:

> Well, you identify who's causin' the problems in the neighborhood. That's who we deal with, the guy who's doing' all the killin'. And that really disrupted. Then you get the authorities to work with you. And you can make a big difference in what' going on.

His comments reflected a neighborhood change in strategy. Rather than being victims of both the drug dealers and the NOPD, residents began to engage the police as allies in efforts to curtail drug-related violence, via a strategy of prevention as opposed to response. This strategy led to the closure of Big Time Tips, one of the neighborhood's violent crime hot spots, resulting in a reduction in neighborhood violence.

Related to this was a newfound understanding of the role of residents as the frontline of violence prevention. When asked for her perspective about why shootings occurred, Zora remarked "People allow them to do stuff, and things are allowed to happen," a comment on the neighborhood's lack of collective efficacy. Asked to elaborate, she responded:

> K: You said the phrase "people allow them to." Talk more about that.
>
> Z: Yeah, the person that own the store. Or the person or people that live in that area, you know, because they're afraid to say anything. So it's allowin' things to happen. We complain, but we still allow.

She later remarked, "I'd rather stand up for something good and lose my life behind it than sit by and, you know, let everything happen. You're gonna lose your life to the violence anyway at some point, you know." Her comments reflected how informal neighborhood controls could the leading edge of efforts to curtail drug-related violence in Hollygrove. An elected official, who took office after the Hollygrove Livable Community's project was implemented, stated:

I believe that neighbors banding together, whether it's, you know, called Neighborhood Watch, whether it's called, whether it's Soul Steppers [a program where Hollygrove seniors walked for exercise through violent crime hot spots]. There was a significant drop in crime when they were walking regularly. You know, I believe that neighbors banding together and being watchful and reporting criminal activity, that lets the police know that, you know, people are watching them and people care about the neighborhood, people are watching them and so they need to perform.

These voices reflected change that occurred as the neighborhood shifted from dependence upon the police as the sole agents of crime prevention to a recognition that prevention began at the neighborhood level.

Exercising collective efficacy required political capital. Standing up to drug dealers was not easy, especially when residents feared that an agencies of formal control would not protect them from retaliatory violence. AARP's participation in the Hollygrove Livable Communities Project brought influence, helping residents to engage city agencies in a way that previously was lacking. The result of this enhanced political capital was an empowered citizenry willing to take risks to intervene, recognizing the police as allies rather than adversaries. The subsequent reduction in drug-related homicides served to validate these efforts, thus bolstering the perception that informal controls could be an effective component of neighborhood to combat the violence that accompanied Hollygrove's illicit economy.

Summary

Perceptions of the drug-related economy in Hollygrove were mixed. Most in Hollygrove recognized that an increasingly complex job market, combined with poor educational preparation, racism, underdeveloped soft skills, limited transportation options, lack of social capital and a dearth of mentors had created an environment with limited options for livable wage jobs. In this context, many both understood why the illicit economy existed and empathized with

those who chose this economic pathway. This empathy had limits, however, as residents blamed

it for the bulk of neighborhood violence while understanding that other options were available to

those engaged in the sale of illegal substances. Even those with a history of drug dealing

recognized their role in the violence that tarnished the neighborhood's reputation and eroded the

positive social networks that marked Hollygrove's past.

Venkatesh (2006) concluded his study of Chicago's underground economy by noting that

structure and agency are interwoven in a complex tangle. Bourgois (2010) ended his study of

New York City crack dealers by noting that violence which would be more appropriately

directed "against their structural oppressors" (p. 326) was enacted interpersonally and locally.

Residents of Hollygrove also had difficulty disentangling structure and agency. They recognized

the structural elements that produced the conditions giving rise to the illicit economy and the

accompanying marginalization, and some even concluded that drugs and violence were

intentionally foisted upon their community. The proscription against violence toward whites was

an important structural element as well, one that largely maintained violence within Hollygrove's

boundaries. At the same time residents recognized the personal and corporate toll the drug

economy exacted in the community and experienced anger toward these agents of community

destruction. The tension between structure and agency found in the work of Venkatesh and

Bourgois was one reflected in the voices of the community. Bourgois contended that the violence

was misplaced, directed into the neighborhood rather than toward the structures that maintain it

there. If, as Bourgois concluded, the violence was to be appropriately directed toward those in

power perhaps greater attention would be paid to the structural elements maintaining it in

Hollygrove.

Two factors prevented this from occurring. First, neighborhood perceptions that drug-related crime was largely limited to hot spots within the neighborhood allowed those living away from them to distance themselves from it. Most considered their street and their neighbors to be safe and violent crime to be occurring at gathering places where alcohol was sold and drugs were distributed. While violence impacted the entire neighborhood, this impact may seem indirect when it is bounded and site-specific. Just as more powerful neighborhoods view Hollygrove as a dangerous neighborhood to be contained and avoided, residents of Hollygrove perceived drug-related violence to be a phenomenon situated elsewhere, albeit in their own neighborhood. Second, residents still maintained their fundamental confidence in the primacy of the formal marketplace and the sanctioned pathways to participation in it. This was true even for those interviewed with experience in the illicit economy. This confidence may have been bolstered by a recent upsurge in political capital brought about by collective action. The neighborhood had a new public school, a new community center, new homes, an improved park, and numerous innovative neighborhood-improvement projects while simultaneously experiencing deepening relationships with political decision-makers like the City Councilperson, the NOPD Second District Commander, and even the mayor. These changes appeared to have lessened cynicism while improving trust in the efficacy of participation in mainstream, sanctioned routes to success.

In addition to perceiving violence as occurring elsewhere, Hollygrove residents used another distancing strategy: projection. They perceived that much of the violence was imported by others coming to the neighborhood who did not share their values. This led them to distrust outsiders who were widely considered to be the source of many of the social ills they experienced. This will be explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 9: Findings

Strangers in the Neighborhood: Hollygrove's Views of Outsiders

Hollygrove's long history of abandonment by the power structures of the city created a climate in which residents concluded they must fend for themselves. The cynicism they experienced led to a perceived need to differentiate between those who were "from" the neighborhood and those who were not. This became an important facet of maintaining neighborhood order and safety. On one hand the ability to distinguish between insiders and outsiders allowed the neighborhood to more readily differentiate between safe people and troublemakers. On the other it constricted opportunities for an influx of new people and ideas that could facilitate opportunity. The boundaries were most rigid when the neighborhood experienced high levels of marginalization; they became more diffuse as the community experienced an increase in social capital. Residents expressed tension between the need to protect their neighborhood against invaders with bad intentions and the need for those who could bring much-needed resources to help them emerge from their marginalized condition.

Wacquant (2008) defined the struggle Hollygrove residents faced, "it is the collapse of public institutions, resulting from state policies of urban abandonment and leading to the punitive containment of the black (sub-)proletariat, that emerges as the most potent and most distinctive cause of the entrenched marginality in the American metropolis" (pp. 3-4). As described earlier, Hollygrove residents had developed an "us versus them" mentality regarding formal power structures such as the police and city government. Although improvements had occurred in recent years, distrust of outsiders lingered. Two NOPD officials described law enforcement's relationship with the community as an "occupying force." One white city government leader, describing a potential rebuilding project in the neighborhood, tearfully recognized "the pain for

the first time of black people who have lived a life of being lied to, to the point that they would insist on leaving an unusable community center in place, you know, because they thought the dollars to replace it would be stolen from them." The mistrust had deep historical roots and was based upon cynicism developed in the face of structural and institutional neglect.

The distrust was not limited to formal institutions; it extended to those entering the neighborhood who did not share residents' concern for the community. Residents perceived a need to defend themselves against individuals who did not care for their property or who caused violence. This became especially pronounced in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The widespread devastation of the community's housing stock led to significant abandonment by those who were evacuated and decided not to return. Tameka, a longstanding resident and middle-class homeowner, told me that "a lot of people from before didn't return but a lot of new families, new people are coming to the neighborhood." This influx of new residents brought those who, according to Dr. T "don't seem as concerned for the community as the older senior citizens do." There was a sense, expressed by most, that these newcomers cared less about the safety and well-being of the neighborhood and thus were not to be trusted.

There were two sub-themes that emerged from the data. The first was concern about "invaders" and a need to defend the community from those that did not share a positive interest in Hollygrove's well-being. The second was mistrust directed at outsiders who brought new ideas for neighborhood improvement. While invaders were universally perceived as negative, changers received a mixed review, especially in light of positive developments that occurred in Hollygrove since Katrina.

People from Outside the Neighborhood: Resident Negative Perceptions of Invaders

Hollygrove residents categorized the tension between insiders and outsiders in two ways.

The first was between stable homeowners and newer, more transient renters. The second was

between long-term residents and those they considered to have come to the neighborhood to

cause harm.   Tameka was a 40-something homeowner and noted that danger was connected to

renters who were not acclimated to the neighborhood's mores:

> I would have to say that the areas that are more dangerous probably are the people who
> are renters. The few people that you have back here that own their home, I'm thinking
> they're the safer areas, like closer to Carrollton and closer to Earhart. I probably would
> have to say that those people are renters, haven't lived in the neighborhood that long like
> some of us have. And you know, it goes back to the same thing, the parents start out on
> Section 8 or whatever and the children kinda follow in their footsteps because they think
> that that's okay and that's the way it should be.

Other homeowners, especially those with longevity in the neighborhood, also expressed

concern about an influx of new renters in the community, many coming from the public housing

complexes that were closed, razed and rebuilt after Katrina. Gardner, Irwin and Peterson (2009)

found the federal government's HOPE VI program had begun to enact "highly punitive policies

to 'manage' people who remained in public housing, including a community service requirement

and a 'one strike and you're out' policy that set stern rules on residents' behavior" (p. 104).

Some Hollygrove residents attributed the influx of new renters to these policies which displaced

those who didn't meet the behavioral requirements to neighborhoods like Hollygrove. In the

following exchange of seniors from a focus group the members expressed this sentiment:

> S1:   Single parents and I don't know what all, but these are places that they brought
> people from other areas and put them back there, there are times when they have
> parties and um, and they have all this loud music, oh 10 or 11 o'clock at night and
> all like that and my neighbors say, "Oh this is not a project, this is my home," and
> she called and reported and I haven't heard that noise since then. So it's the
> outsiders, people that are invading, the young people that are invading the
> neighborhood that's…

S2:   My cousin live in Hollygrove and my 7-year-old, have a party for my 7-year-old by my cousin house, so all the rest of the kids they know my (indistinguishable) and they having a party here because they can't have it where they live in…

S3:   (interrupting) in those new projects.

S2:   (resuming) in the new projects, they cannot have it. So if your cousin live in Hollygrove but she say, "Oh, you can come and have a party in the yard." So people migrate to the party. And when they have a children party it's an adult party anyway. So they goes to 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, although the children are asleep somewhere. Next time it might be downtown, somebody's daughter having a birthday party but they can't have it in the project 'cause they knew they'd get put out.

Hollygrove residents understood these residents to have different standards of behavior, something homeowners considered disruptive to the quality-of-life in Hollygrove and a precursor to trouble. Eldridge, a 20-something homeowner, attributed the danger in certain areas of Hollygrove to transient renters:

Well, a lot of that has to do with, it's just a certain types of people that live in those areas. A lot of people rent properties and stuff like that and it's a lot of people that move in and out, in and out. Like in this neighborhood (noting the section where he lives) it's not too many people that move in and out. I think the only person that moved in is on that, I think a duplex on the corner and they've been there a few years. I think when you constantly have different people you don't know what kind of element you adding into that community and I think it's like lower income people that's poor and they'll be more likely if there's so many people living in one household it's a higher chance of the wrong person, the wrong type of person. You know you got some people have like 10, 15 people living in one house.

Renters with a longer history in the neighborhood expressed similar opinions. Caroline, a long-time renter in the community, shared the homeowners' perceptions connecting danger to newer residents. Despite Hollygrove's reduction in violent crime, she said "it feels more dangerous because the people that is doing the crime, I don't know the people," adding "so I don't want to stay anywhere where the neighborhood has a lot of new people. I know the elderly people that stay back here but they got a lot of new people that I don't know and that's what I'm afraid of

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and why I wouldn't stay back here." While she continued to work at a Hollygrove community

center, her fear of outsiders led her to live outside the neighborhood.

Renters, however, were not the sole cause of danger in the minds of Hollygrove residents.

Many thought outsiders intentionally came to the neighborhood to cause problems. Residents

mentioned three problematic things that outsiders were thought to bring into into the

neighborhood: guns, drugs, and visitors to neighborhood ABOs.

Several interviewees presumed the guns in the community were being imported by

outsiders. Claude, a senior homeowner who lived in Hollygrove most of his life asked, "Where

the hell they getting all these goddamn guns from?" One of the community leaders, a 40-

something director of a nonprofit agency, lamented the widespread availability of guns,

especially in the hands of younger people:

> I cannot understand for the life of me where are all the guns and ammunition coming
> from? If we're talking about 14 to 18 year olds, where are they getting these weapons?
> How are there so many weapons on the street, and then, not to just have the weapons but
> to continually get ammunition for em? Where is this stuff coming from? I, that's not,
> how you just get that? Constantly. And we poor. So, bullets are not cheap, where,
> where I don't get it.

In 1998 a former Mayor of New Orleans, Marc Morial, lost a high profile lawsuit against

gun manufacturers for making guns too easily available. One of the seniors recalled that effort,

explaining that the loss had long-term implications for the safety of communities like

Hollygrove:

> So you gotta remember, you've had drug addicts in the community forever, however in
> more recent years not only did the drugs come in but guns came in. As poor black people
> we have not the means for getting in the guns and drugs. So somebody is financing the
> guns coming into our neighborhood and the drugs and it's not us. And they've got our
> children with the guns and the drugs, with the violence, you see. And Marc Morial tried
> to see if he could have some legislation about not having the guns or going after the gun
> manufacturers. Well as you know there's a very strong gun lobby that prevents this. And
> not only do we have this here but you can go around to all the urban areas in this country
> and you have this violence, this shooting of people on a regular basis. I don't know why

you'd ever let 30 people a day get killed by gun violence and that's a big upcry when we have an unfortunate police officer because someone didn't frisk somebody properly. You had this poor girl that was shot, she wasn't the intended victim but a bullet doesn't know who's the intended victim and who isn't, you see. So part of it goes to the gun manufacturers and the gun lobby and of course they say the second amendment right, the right to bear arms.

The 20-something males knew how and where to buy a gun as well as the purchase price, $100 for someone familiar to the seller and $250 for a stranger. Purchased legally the cost of a firearm was twice that amount. Since there were no gun shops in Hollygrove residents thought that guns were imported to the neighborhood by outsiders who profit from their sales. One community leader thought that little was being done to trace the source of these guns, implying that gun violence in Hollygrove was of little concern to agents of formal control:

> we make guns, we gotta track em, you know? It's just crazy. Ammunition is tracked, it has tracking numbers on them and all that stuff. So, how do we get it? Fourteen year olds carrying guns, really? Had to come from somewhere.

 Law enforcement officials and residents both stated that neighborhood gun violence was linked to outsiders entering the community to both purchase and sell drugs. One senior, commenting on this, stated "I think it's the people who don't live in this neighborhood who come and conduct their business in this neighborhood and when it goes wrong they're not interconnected with over the river because it happened over here. You go back over the river and the, someplace else." These words reflected an understanding that outsiders brought guns and drugs in the neighborhood, benefitted from the profits but escaped culpability for the violent neighborhood results.

In addition to the widespread availability of guns as a source of violence, residents also connected violence to outsiders who came to the neighborhood to purchase drugs. One senior described drug deals happening across the street from her home, "when I was living in the front of my house, my kitchen was right there on Gen. Ogden, you would be surprised at how many

white people come back here, make their transaction and go back to their office." A former neighborhood drug dealer described this from the perspective of the seller:

> They got a bunch of drug dealers out here hanging. He has his own clientele. And everybody be dealing with different people from different neighborhoods. I don't sell to just people in my neighborhood, I sell to people outside the neighborhood, so when you call me, well whatcha need? Where you at? I'm on Forshey Street. So they got people from other neighborhoods coming back to come score so they know, where it's at. So if they want to come in there and do you something, they know where you at.

Even law enforcement officials acknowledged this as one police officer state, "You have some great people back there, a lot of great people, but you also have some really violent people that are still either anchored back there or, 'cause of whatever reason, have left the neighborhood and they no longer live there but historically have done their violence there, they have trafficked in narcotics there, and they still come back to that area to commit those crimes." Many attributed the supply, sales and purchase of drugs to outsiders. When violence erupted it differentially impacted the residents; the outsiders could leave while the residents remained to absorb both the impact of the violence and the enduring reputation of the neighborhood as a dangerous place.

Residents stated that violence related to guns and drugs was more prevalent at neighborhood ABOs. The flashpoint for much of the neighbors' concern was a two block stretch of the neighborhood where most of the drugs were sold and where a significant amount of gun violence occurred. Several singled out Big Time Tips, a bar located in that area, as an especially dangerous place where outsiders would gather. Tips had a long history in the neighborhood as a family-owned gathering place but in recent years it changed ownership and was managed by outsiders who were not thought to share the community's concern for the neighborhood. Charles lived on the same block as the bar and was impacted by the escalating violence that took place there. He recounted its demise:

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These new people come back here, you don't even know 'em. Before the hurricane, it was really bad. They done got completely out of hand. They always had drugs back here but it wasn't centralized, it wasn't rampant. But it got to the point where they had Big Time Tips, before that used to be Margie's Bar, on that corner, on the corner of Eagle and Olive, Eagle and Edinburgh, that was Ms. Margie's Bar. Harry Valley was the name, that was way back, every now and then you'd have a couple of skirmishes but you didn't have all that killing and all that dope. Everything was OK, was low profile. You really didn't hear too much about it. But when Eli, they called him Ghost and that's how they came up with the name Ghost Town. Eli, when he got the place, they started letting all the young people come back here, they'd come from all over, everywhere.

His explanation for violence was the presence of youth from other neighborhoods. Angela lived on the same block, across the street from Tips. She stated that the recent reduction of violence occurred when the bar was shuttered by neighborhood activists:

When the bar shut down, there was that congregation of people weren't coming there. You didn't have an influx from all the different areas 'cause it was a very popular bar 'cause you can be there and participate in all kinds of activity and you weren't being shut down from it. You had an inside scoop and there was always somebody from outside, "Hey man, here comes the police" and informs somebody. And things would cool down, calm down, flush down, whatever, you know? So you didn't have people just coming in the neighborhood any more like that, certainly not that time of night. So that automatically changed the area.

In her recollection, the bar had become a staging area for drug sales by and to outsiders. The closure of the ABO meant that outsiders were no longer coming into the neighborhood at that location to participate in the illicit economy which she surmised was organized specifically around Tips.

These respondents considered outsiders, rather than Hollygrove residents, to be as important as location in their understanding of neighborhood violence. While drug use and sales had a long history in Hollygrove, residents understood violence to occur when people from outside the neighborhood became involved. This hinted at collective efficacy, as neighbors saw those with a stake in the neighborhood, even when involved in the illicit economy, as less likely to engage in violence inside the community. Outsiders, on the other hand, were not thought to

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have a stake in the neighborhood, bringing guns, drugs and violence, then escaping to other places and avoiding the ill effects their actions were perceived to cause.

The view of outsiders as primary agents of neighborhood violence was interesting. Several of the participants in the study acknowledged participating in violence so it was apparent that outsiders were not the sole cause of it. There appeared to be two reasons for this. First, residents differentiated between the motivations of those engaged in the subculture and violence of the underground economy, attributing insider involvement to economic necessity and outsider involvement to predatory motives. Second, resident desire to defend their neighborhood required an ability to define who belonged and who didn't. When formal controls did not serve the neighborhood adequately, neighborhood boundaries became more rigid and residents saw outsiders as the primary threat to community safety.

We're Gonna Fight That: Outsiders as Agents of Change.

The distrust of outsiders was not limited to those engaged in the illicit economy but included those who wanted to impose new ideas for neighborhood change. Hollygrove residents resisted change, mistrusting outside interventions that could lessen their tenuous hold on control of their own neighborhood. One example of this was mentioned earlier in the comments of a government leader citing the seniors' fear of razing a long-neglected community center due to concern that the money would be stolen and the building project abandoned. Others thought that neighborhood violence was related to outsiders who profited from their misfortune. One resident even suspected that a plot was underway to devalue property values in an effort to reclaim valuable land strategically located in the center of the city:

> I think, I think people are awake at night when we're sleepin' and tryin' to think about OK, what can we do to change the construction or whatever you would call it within an

area. And Earhart, when I was in Booker Washington in 1965-66, that Earhart Expressway was thought about, and it was many years ago. I've been out of school 50 years and that Earhart Expressway was thought about back then. There were, blueprints, on that bein' done. The connection was supposed to be Earhart to the Interstate, so they need this land. And now we're still talkin' about the railroad comin' from Metairie here. It's all in the plan. And we don't know when the plan gonna go through, but it's gonna go through or it planned to go through, but we're gonna fight that.

Resistance to change in Hollygrove reflected the historical lack of political capital and the accompanying powerlessness that residents experienced. Residents regarded change agents with mistrust in light of years of community neglect by those in positions of power. Thus outsiders with ideas for neighborhood improvement were met with resistance and suspicion. At the same time change was needed for neighborhood improvement, especially changes that led to violence reduction.

Since Hurricane Katrina many outsiders relocated to the community. Some brought ideas for community improvement but thought their ideas were being resisted. One community leader from the focus group, an African American woman in her 60s who purchased a home in Hollygrove and has been active in the community, expressed a sense of frustration with this dynamic:

When, post-Katrina, when we sat around downstairs and talked about the history and how many years you've lived here, it was a real sense of I didn't belong here because, for, at the time I didn't even live in Hollygrove. I represented somebody from the outside. I guess more prominent for white folks, but it's not just white folks, it's other people and that represents change and when you talk, when we do, used to do surveys and so forth, people could see no, what's the point? There's no sense of need for growth, I don't want to say there's no sense of need, but there's no urgent feeling for we need to get better, do things differently, things are fine just the way they are.

Despite having worked in the neighborhood for 15 years, she experienced resistance and attributed this to her status as an outsider. She reflected upon her experience of the cynicism of the community toward change efforts, noting that residents resist based upon their perceptions

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that such efforts in the past have not resulted in substantive improvement. Residents were both

weary and wary of novelty.

The resistance toward outside agents of change appeared to be lessening, however. The

same community leader would later reflect on new developments in the neighborhood imported

by outsiders that were effective in improving the community and brought an element of hope:

> I think post-Katrina so many positive things happened. Not everybody in the
> neighborhood got involved in change, making things better but I think almost everybody
> was impacted by the people that were involved. What we did with the AARP and even
> the Hollygrove Market and all of that, the seniors, all of those things were small and
> somewhat connected and involved a handful of people, it did not involve the whole
> neighborhood. But you can't say how directly they were influenced except that it
> changed the atmosphere in the neighborhood. I think the threat, that fear of outsiders
> coming in, began to dissipate and the resistance to change lessened, I think everybody
> actually did, many people, the majority of people really did have concern about crime.
> And we did that thing, we're going to reduce crime and it, for the first time people said,
> "Yeah, you know, something could happen."

A police official also noticed the changes brought by outsiders:

> The farmer's market back there is great, which is bringing different people back to the
> community, bringing people from outside. I've even gone there to get eggs before. So
> you know it brings outside people into the community. That's great—you can't even put
> a price tag on it because it's a neighborhood that in the '90s anybody would have been
> scared to go in. And now you have people, 'cause of the farmer's market, that are not
> from Hollygrove and maybe not even from New Orleans—maybe they're from Jefferson
> Parish—that traditionally would have been, "I would never go to New Orleans," scared to
> come into the city. And the only way they'd even come into New Orleans is if they're
> drivin' on the interstate and they just keep goin', now coming to the farmer's market on a
> regular basis to buy things. When I've gone there, I've seen people from all over the city.
> And I think that's great because it makes the neighborhood almost like a normal
> neighborhood now. And somebody who would've said before, "I'll never live back
> there" now would maybe even consider movin' back in there…

Recent neighborhood changes brought increased political and social capital and an improved

neighborhood reputation. This may explain some of the reduced resistance toward outside

influences. Dr. T explained the change in attitude by opining, "As more and more people come

in and not only move into the community, embrace the community, and care for the community,

change can happen." Positive developments in the neighborhood occurred when outsiders were allowed to collaborate with the community. As the neighborhood's boundaries became less rigid and defended it allowed the neighborhood to experience more political and social capital, thus helping the neighborhood to reduce its marginalization.

Summary

Hollygrove was a neighborhood that had experienced what Wacquant (2008) termed advanced marginality defined by sociospatial isolation, the retrenchment of the labor market, the intrusion of the formal police controls, and the recoiling of the welfare system. In the context of political and social abandonment Hollygrove residents developed a siege mentality fostered by both the strong need for self-preservation and a deep mistrust for those from outside the community whose motives may be detrimental to its well-being. Outsiders were branded as invaders and defenses were erected to protect against their advances. The police were seen as an occupying force. Politicians were widely considered to be biased against neighborhood interests. The economic interests of the city were thought to be profiting at the expense of local residents. The resulting resistance, even against those outsiders who could potentially facilitate change, brought further isolation and marginality.

Given the longstanding neglect and marginalization of the neighborhood, such resistance was understandable. And yet, in the years since Katrina, residents appeared to be more comfortable with some outsiders. Sampson (2012) credited post-Katrina rebuilding efforts for triggering collective efficacy and collective action, concluding that "despite poverty, racial segregation and other challenges exacerbated by the truly top-down force of mother nature, community-based organizations provided an opening to enhance collective efficacy and

collective civic action" (p. 372). The widespread devastation of Hollygrove provided opportunity for the community to rethink previous attitudes toward outsiders. As residents returned to the community in desperate need of help, outsiders were allowed a unique window through which they brought novel ideas for innovation. Outside ideas alone did not build collective efficacy, however, the difference was the collaborative relationship between residents and outsiders, where local visions for a better neighborhood were coupled with resources they could not have secured on their own. The result was an empowered citizenry with enhanced social and political capital.

At the same time residents still experienced mistrust of other outsiders. These included new residents who didn't share their values, renters who were perceived to cause disruption, importers of guns, drug purchasers and visitors to neighborhood ABOs. Many perceived these outsiders to be a significant source of neighborhood lethal violence.

The difference was one of definition; residents appeared to more ably delineate between those who would harm the neighborhood and those who would help. Two realities made this possible. The first was an increase in political capital as outside actors helped residents to gain a voice and sufficient power to attract the attention of the city. The second was an influx of new residents who did not share the longstanding mistrust of outsiders. This combination led Dr. T to note "as the numbers of safe people and the trustworthy people go up and the people that were once on the outside, doing the violent acts and being the aggressors come into this safe place, then the number of the dangerous people are gonna go down and this ratio of safety to dangerous is gonna go down to the point where there is no more danger, there is no more violence." While this may prove to be an overly optimistic view, his perspective did serve to capture the burgeoning awareness that not all outsiders brought danger to the community.

The post-Katrina rebuilding experiences of Hollygrove residents were unique. They were not simply rebuilding homes, they were attempting to rebuild a better, safer community. During many community meetings conducted during those years residents exhibited an ability to innovate and creatively enact solutions resulting in a neighborhood better than the one they evacuated. Extending this creativity to the problem of neighborhood rates of homicide, the next chapter focuses on resident-driven solutions to neighborhood homicide.

Chapter 10: Findings

The Difference is Me: Grassroots Solutions to the Problem of Lethal Violence

Early in his interview Robert, the former drug dealer with multiple felony convictions, shared a revelation he had in the courtroom. He remarked upon the changes in his life that prompted him to choose the occupation of auto mechanic, a job for which he was trained in the penitentiary, over drug dealing. We were discussing his life in Hollygrove's subculture and his transition back to the neighborhood. I wanted to understand what factors led to the change of occupation. In the following exchange he explained his reasoning:

> The difference is me. The difference is me right now, like I said, I'm not about to put myself in a position where, I've been home over a year now, a little over a year now. Judge White told me I have five felony convictions. Judge White told me, she said "Robert, you have no room for error right now. You mess up one more time, I promise you, you never come back home again." And I believe her. I got too much to lose right now. I got a wife. I got kids. And like I said, I'm not about to go spend the rest of my life just sitting in a prison with a bunch of, you know what I'm saying?

After years of participating in the Keeping It Real subculture, something changed. The prospect of the rest of his life in prison brought Robert to the realization that his future was one he could control; he was the difference-maker. He was not alone. Hollygrove's change is recent years was the result of many deciding that they were the difference, that the solution to Hollygrove's violence rested in the neighborhood's control.

Gregory (1998) wrote "the concept of an 'inner city' isolated from the American 'mainstream' and plagued with escalating rates of welfare dependency, crime, and teen pregnancy has served as a dominant trope for representing urban black experience in the post-civil rights era, conflating, in the minds of many, black identity, urbanism, and the 'tangle of pathology' of the poor" (p. 5). He chronicled the struggle of African Americans in a dispossessed community for political power, neighborhood services, and environmental justice,

while combatting the prevailing attitudes that conflated race, poverty and social pathology. Tamesha was a college sophomore raised in Hollygrove by a single mother with limited intellectual skills. She fought hard to graduate from the city's flagship public school, receiving a full ride to an elite college in the northeast. Tamesha described Hollygrove in a similar fashion to Gregory's:

> I mean, just look. This is a black neighborhood. And in this neighborhood, in the South I feel like at least in Louisiana, black is equated with like poor. It has to do with segregation, it has to do with—I don't know if you've ever noticed, and I've always brought this up, literally you cross Earhart, or you go down this way, it's like sectioned off. It's like you go from the slums, no trees, all concrete, to like trees and palms. And it has to do with the structure of the city back in the day. And I feel like violence, gun violence in black communities, is something that has been structured. It has almost been formulated. You have an oppressive system sayin', oh, you can't, if you want financial assistance you can't have a husband basically. You have a system that makes you as a person livin' in, you have a system that makes you feel like, I have to take matters into my own hands to protect myself…Anybody can call the police, but does everybody feel secure? Does the police make everybody feel secure?

In a city where structural forces limited the help that black neighborhoods received, an ethic of self-help became paramount. In Hollygrove the residents had to fend for themselves for so long that distrust of formal systems emerged.

In the years since Katrina, however, neighbors long marginalized as residents of a dangerous, poor, African American, inner-city community began to create a new narrative. Community residents worked to engage politicians and agents of formal control, to rebuild long-neglected community infrastructure, and to address systemic injustices, shifting from passive victims to active participants. Cowen (2014) concluded that the "rebirth of the 'neighborhood effect'" (p. 114) in Hollygrove was brought about by two factors: collaborative partnerships and shared community vision. Wooten (2012) chronicled the neighborhood's efforts to improve its reputation after the storm and pointed out that the efforts occurred despite local government's inattention to their work. Rich and Benson (2012) situated one post-Katrina resident project, the

Hollygrove Market and Farm, among the nation's best-practices in food security. This external praise was mirrored by residents who expressed a growing sense of pride and optimism as neighborhood improvements, coupled with a significant reduction in violent crime, led to revitalized collective efficacy.

Most macrosociological studies of neighborhood homicide concluded with sweeping policy suggestions that proposed top-down solutions. Many academics and politicians created programmatic interventions to combat neighborhood violence with minimal input from those who daily lived in the milieu. There was a paternalism in this approach, one that reified the prevailing mainstream judgments of a helpless population in need of outside intervention. In Hollygrove, however, residents drove grassroots efforts that marked their post-Katrina rebuilding. Building upon those successes at neighborhood change, recognizing that Hollygrove residents possessed untapped knowledge, part of this study was devoted to understanding whether this knowledge might be extended to novel solutions for neighborhood homicide.

This supposition proved correct, Hollygrove's residents advanced 120 separate solutions for reducing homicide in the community. These were analyzed into five categories: community strategies, educational strategies, formal control strategies, quality-of-life strategies and economic strategies. The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to sharing the best of these ideas.

Community-based Strategies

Most of the strategies for the amelioration of community violence were community-based. Many residents referred to the importance of meetings, specifically highlighting three types: organizing meetings where residents could strategize ways to improve collective efficacy, parties to solidify community unity through relationship-building, and special service-related

events. William, a 30-something renter, proposed two types "meetings on how they can make things safe around here" and meetings where "white and black come together and fight against it." He considered neighborhood unity to be an important component of violence reduction and noted that community efforts would be enhanced if the greater New Orleans community, especially the dominant white power bloc, would choose to exercise their power on behalf of the neighborhood. In a similar vein a member of the community leaders focus group recommended that the neighborhood needed to "continue what we were doing, having vacant houses that are troublesome torn down and doing community action against it, having community meetings, talking about problems and coming up with solutions, that's been, that has been the big change." This comment reflected recent successes at violence reduction that occurred after implementing a crime prevention expert's strategy of fixing neighborhood physical disorder.

The community residents also recommended that some of the meetings be fun and focused upon relationship-building. Angela remembered a time in Hollygrove when:

> We used to, every Easter, we'd have a big party. Everybody on the block would be barbecuing, you know, or boiling seafood. And we'd be dancing in this yard or this yard, you know, or whatever, laughing, just everybody having a good time. I would love to go back to that. I mean people used to cook, send somebody something, you know? I used to love to bake my bread. I can't remember my recipe to save my life. But I used to love to do that and send it to my neighbors, you know? Just having camaraderie with others, not staying in your house.

Zora, the day care provider, had a similar view:

> Again, we have to get together and do more stuff, like more fun stuff. Just more fun stuff for kids and adults to participate in where they gonna say, "You know what, I can help in doin' that, I can help in doin' this." And talkin' to them. That's how you get to talk to people, by doin' things, you know?

The work of community building can be taxing. Residents thought that celebrating hard work marked important milestones and built relationships. These residents asserted that periodic celebratory meetings might be interspersed with working meetings as components of violence

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reduction. They desired a milieu that enhanced relationship-building and community collective efficacy.

A third type of community meeting were service-related. Robert, formerly involved in the neighborhood violence shared this solution:

> Yeah, like I said, just get more involved in the neighborhood. I be going to different neighborhoods when I used to be just getting around, they be havin' a lot of shit everywhere else. People just out there. They neighborhood, they got shit going on at the park. They might have the Indians at the park, free food giveaway, another park, they got a basketball tournament goin' on out there. Go over here they got a flag football game. You know what I'm sayin'? People in general like to feel like they a part of something. You know what I'm sayin'? They just want to feel like a part of something. So get out there and do something about it.

Neighborhood service was an effective part of the neighborhood's self-improvement strategy. The neighborhood association wrote and received a grant to purchase lawnmowers to cut overgrown vacant lots. Residents planted trees. Neighbors planned and conducted an annual Night Out Against Crime in conjunction with the city. The seniors conducted their own community programs for ten years while awaiting the rebuilding of the neighborhood senior center. Several seniors began the Hollygrove Soul Steppers that walked for exercise past crime hotspots to maintain vigilance and send the message that the community was watching. These resident efforts were innovative ways of organizing the community around improvement. As residents realized their power to reshape the community, they built collective efficacy.

Residents also mentioned church attendance as a way to both transmit positive values and redirect bad actors to a more constructive path. This suggestion came from a wide age range, from the oldest member of the study to the youngest. Claude, the oldest member of the study was a lifelong church attender who thought the answer was "education and the churches," adding "get these children into Sunday School, get 'em active in the church to keep them doin' something." Langston, in his early 20s, thought that "prayer walking and, you know, goin'

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around getting along with people, like inviting people to church" was the solution. Dr. T

concurred, noting "in praying for situations to cut down on violence, God will show us how to

interact with these people, how to engage these people." Kobe who, in his late teens was the

youngest member of the study, gave an expanded explanation of his solution to Hollygrove's

murder rate, beginning and ending with a spiritual emphasis:

> I think the only way you could ever change something like that is through education and the church. I think that's the only way you could turn it, 'cause some of the people are already too late in their life to like affect in big ways versus the drug dealers or the people who have been in jail multiple times on different offenses and stuff. They can't really get a good job because of the way things are set up. That's always gonna be in they head, that's always gonna bug them. But then you got kids who aren't at that point where they're going to start getting into some serious trouble and you could still affect [them]. I think if you could affect kids you could stop that cycle of senseless murders or robbery and drug use. If you could somehow affect those kids you could affect the ones that come up after them because the ones that come up after them are going to look up to them and they're going to see, alright these kids aren't doing drugs, they aren't shooting and killing people and that's how you start up a new cycle, a better one. But as for the older ones, it'd be cool if they could somehow set up some kind of job for 'em, some kind of way of having work and earning a fair [wage], without having to do anything bad. And also church because I think a lot of people haven't found Jesus and it's like they pretty much don't know why they living. You know they just out there, "I gotta get some money so I can eat," get drugs or whatever. And if a lot of them actually turned to God I think it might change their lives for the better. And, in fact, that could triangulate to the younger kids.

Kobe's solution was especially poignant as his mother and siblings were all immersed in the

drug subculture and had been to prison, while he had never used drugs, had been involved in

church and was the only one in his family to attend university. His perspective was based both

upon his personal experiences and his recognition of the limiting impact of drugs and mass

incarceration upon the life chances of those like his mother and siblings.

Several in the study mentioned mentoring as a solution for neighborhood homicide. The

young men in the 20-something focus group bemoaned the neighborhood's lack of mentors:

M1:   They don't have mentors, they need mentors.

M2:   Daddies don't want to take care of them.

M3:   Mentors, like [name deleted] said, there's no opportunity. Like, OK, let's say I'm 13 years old and I'm thinking to myself, "I'm good, Mr. Kevin got this program he going to help me get in. Play basketball when I'm this age, and I'm going to school here when I'm this age," they don't have that, and if they had it they don't know where to find it.

All the young men in the focus group were raised without fathers. They experienced a need for positive role-models who could help them map their future, get them involved in sports, and act in their absent fathers' stead. One of the seniors offered an intriguing type of mentorship, using unemployed and retired men experiencing joblessness or retirement to act as job mentors for the community's young men:

> We got a lot of men that's sitting around doing nothing when they could be teaching these young men how to be men, because a lot of these young boys don't have men in their homes; they mother, they mother is the whole source of everything, but they have men in the neighborhood that's sitting around all day doing nothing, might have been a carpenter, might have been a mechanic, might have been, you know? They could teach these kids how to do painting, do, paint the houses there, whatever.

This proposal had three implications. First, the years immediately following retirement could become extremely productive for men willing to pass their knowledge to younger men. Second, those who are unemployed were thought to have valuable skills which could be transmitted to mentees, providing worth for men devalued by the job market. Finally, this idea presented a ready source of mentors within the community, men who had existing ties to the community and understood the realities faced by the youth of Hollygrove. Rather than bringing outside mentors into the community, this solution had potential to bring meaning to both Hollygrove's youth and to those who were unemployed or retired.

Several mentioned recreational opportunities for Hollygrove's youth as potential solutions. One senior pointed to the fact that seniors had a place to go, "we come here, we meet, we try to support each other, but young people have nowhere to gather and nothing to do." She

pointed to the need "to do something that will entice and help our young people on the good side." The solution she forwarded was "something in every neighborhood for these children to do." Other ideas included accessible and inviting parks, neighborhood basketball tournaments and a community pool. Because youth crime peaks during unstructured, non-school hours structured activities for neighborhood youth was thought to serve two purposes: prosocial values transmission and positive diversion from the allure of the subculture.

Residents thought community centers might help reduce violence. Several mentioned Trinity Christian Community, a faith-based community center located in Hollygrove that offered programs but had also been key to advocacy and community redevelopment efforts in the neighborhood. A former resident, now in city government, mentioned an innovative solution of intergenerational programs that could take place at the senior center that was undergoing re-construction in the neighborhood, "You also might see a change once the center is opening again and we can get the seniors back there to start instilling [values] and to get the people to buy into generational programs where the seniors can help the young people to give them some basic skills and help them with their education and see if we can change this around." As the new senior center was one block from the newly constructed community school, this idea had merit. Seniors had a lifetime of experience that could be beneficial to the youth of the community. He was suggesting that both values transmission and educational and job-related skills could be tapped in an effort to enhance the lives of both youth and the seniors themselves.

The literature notes that mentoring does have a positive impact on at-risk youth. Tolan, Henry, Schoeny, Lovegrove and Nichols (2013) used meta-analysis of 46 studies published between 1970-2011 to find that mentoring at-risk youth had a significant and positive effect on delinquency, aggression, drug use and academic functioning, issues that residents reported to be

important in their understanding of neighborhood violence. DuBois, Holloway, Valentine and Cooper (2002) in a meta-analysis of 55 studies found only modest effectiveness overall but noted that mentoring's impact is significantly improved under two conditions: when empirically-based best practices are used and when strong relationships are formed between mentors and youth. Community-based volunteers exposed to many of the challenges faced by Hollygrove's youth may understand them better and thus had an enhanced ability to relate to their unique neighborhood context.

Two other community-based strategies mentioned by participants included homeownership and community rain gardens. Eldridge was a young homeowner in his late 20s who stated "I'd like to see a lot more homeowners around. I'd like to see a lot of these abandoned houses that nobody reclaimed since Katrina either torn down or remodeled." Angela submitted that Section 8 renters could be converted into homeowners:

> I think it's so foolish, this Section 8 thing. You gonna pay the landlord this much money where the people who are living in the house that you're paying for, if you just gave them a little help they could be buying a property instead of you just helping the people who have something already get more, and these people are not feeling good about themselves. Renters don't really have to worry. But if it was their property, you know, they would be taking care of it 'cause they'd have pride of ownership. They'd have pride in themselves. They'd be feeling good. Why the government is so foolish—I'm on my soapbox.

Hollygrove's abandoned houses provided a unique opportunity for homeownership and could provide locations for experimentation with innovative homeownership funding strategies such as the one expressed by Angela. Kane and Cronin (2009) connected residential instability to a lack of neighborhood social controls and social disorganization leading to neighborhood violence. Residents thought that increased homeownership would lead to neighborhood stability and reduced neighborhood violence and thus this solution was consistent with one of social disorganization theory's explanations of violence.

Another community problem was street flooding. Much of New Orleans was below sea level and prone to flooding after torrential rains when the city's pumps became overwhelmed. Caroline referenced the rain gardens, a collaborative project of the Tulane City Center, the Carrollton Hollygrove Community Development Corporation and Trinity Christian Community to construct water-retention gardens in resident yards thereby keeping the water from entering the city's drainage system and potentially preventing street flooding. Flooding was a sign of neighborhood infrastructure disorder, a condition that Skogan (1990) connected to higher rates of crime. Caroline saw this connection and proposed the expansion of an innovative solution to flooding with potential impact upon neighborhood violence.

Sampson (2012) found that altruistic communities, those that pair shared expectations for action with behavioral action, had significantly lower homicide rates. Saville (2009) noted that communities who were trained to "create and regulate their own safety in collaboration with service providers" (p. 309) were able to effectively reduce neighborhood crime. St. Jean (2007) showed that "neighborhood collection action resulted in displacement or elimination of criminal activities" (p. 247). Existing research established that communities willing to take action and to act altruistically on their own behalf could curtail violent crime. Furthermore, Skogan's (1990) finding that a community's physical disorder was positively associated with neighborhood crime indicated that Hollygrove resident's concerns about disorder was well-founded.

Hollygrove's community-based strategy solutions had potential to significantly reduce violence in the neighborhood by both enhancing neighborhood control and drawing attention to a marginalized community. Internally the strategies drew neighbors together and provided ownership and pride of place, a key to neighborhood collective efficacy. These strategies had also captured the imagination of outsiders who observed, studied and wrote about how the

community's efforts helped to increase the neighborhood's social capital. The net effect was empowerment, a sense that residents could do for themselves something that externally-imposed strategies had failed to accomplish.

Educational Strategies

Hollygrove residents in this study valued education and considered it to be a key in the struggle to reduce neighborhood violence. There were two sets of strategies suggested by respondents regarding education: those that involved the formal educational system and strategies that involved informal educational opportunities. Through the duration of this study, the local public school was under construction. During the ten years between Katrina and the current study residents had fought diligently with the school board to have Paul L. Dunbar School rebuilt. As construction commenced residents fought another battle to ensure control over which charter school entity would operate the school. The concern was that an outside operator would not value the desires of the community and might cater to a student population bused into the neighborhood while neglecting the needs of the local community's children.

Angela, who was educated at Dunbar Elementary as were her children, captured well the sentiment of many in the study toward formal educational strategies:

> You gotta start at the very bottom of the ladder. You have to give everyone, or as many as you possibly can which should be everyone, an education. You need dedicated teachers, you need dedicated parents, and you need students to be informed almost continuously that you are important, you can do this if you truly want to have a good life. You have to inform them that selling drugs on the street is not the life you want. You want to, everything isn't about sports or being a rapper, you gotta want more out of your life besides cash. You want to feel proud of yourself. You want pride in your area and of your children. You have to realize that what you're doing now is going to be passed on to your children. And the parents got to realize it and they gotta get their children—they gotta do their durndest to—not to say that they're gonna listen, but you gotta fight for them. So I think everything has to start with a good education. And there are a lot of parents that need to be going to school right along with their children.

Schools, according to Angela, were more than purveyors of academics but should be places that helped their students embrace a vision for their futures. Along the way schools must involve parents in the process of education, embracing them as partners in the process. Parental involvement was also mentioned by John, who told me that "the parents have to get involved, or *the* parent, really needs to understand, you know, the consequences of what's going on." Prior to Katrina the Parent-Teacher Organization at Dunbar was sparsely attended. John's assertion intimated that quality schools required active parental participation once the new school was completed.

Caroline thought that schools needed to provide enhanced opportunities for students. Her ideal school "would give 'em, I guess a lot of opportunities, they got schools that have, you know, the French, they have French in school, you know, so a nice school having the materials, materials they could use, computers and stuff, you know?" Quality schools were thought to be well-resourced with broad curricula including foreign languages and access to technology. This was no idle speculation; during Caroline's years at Dunbar her guardians had to provide toilet paper as part of her school supplies. Tameka thought that schools should:

> teach financial literacy to children, start out when they are young, make that part of the curriculum in school. Teach them about investing, teach them about what's a Roth IRA or a 401k, so when they are older and they have two dollars to save, they can put those two dollars into a Roth IRA or a mutual fund or whatever, you know, instead of putting them in the freezer like my grandmother did or putting them under the mattress. Teach them about those things so when they get older they'll know what to do and how to do. When you get that good training and that good job, make some money and be able to invest and do other things that you want to do.

For Tameka life skills training, such as financial literacy, were thought to provide opportunities for participation in the formal economy and could become an alternate pathway out of the structural impediments that marginalized residents and gave rise to the informal economy.

Out-of-school time was important to residents as well. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2014) stated that juvenile violence peaks in the afterschool hours, between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m., on school days and between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. on non-school days. This fact led one former resident to advocate "a stronger educational system where not only are you able to teach the child during that normal classroom days, classroom time, but also be able to have them come in after class for additional activities and then activities in the neighborhood that keeps people's minds on the right direction instead of the wrong direction." The 20-something young men also thought that out-of-school time programs such as the ones provided by a local community center, could reduce neighborhood violence. In the following exchange they shared their views about this:

M1: like the center, you got all those activities going on for all them children and stuff. When they get out of school they not going on the corner and go fraternize with all these other…

M2: they got the opportunity to go to the Center.

M3: I'm going to the center, 'cause when I go to the Center, I know I'm going to have this, that and the other, I know I'm going to be able to do this and it will help with life. People look forward to that type of stuff, you got people helping you.

Educational opportunities, according to these residents, need not be limited to formal academic institutions but could continue after the school day concluded. The schedule of working parents did not conform to school hours, leaving youth with unstructured and unsupervised time between the conclusion of the school day and the time a parent returns from work. Providing alternative activities during these hours was thought to impact neighborhood violent crime.

Parenting assistance was another educational strategy forwarded by informants. Charles' idea was to bring parents to a community center and offer parenting assistance:

I would tell them to, to have a meeting, have a community meeting at the school, or at a neighborhood center, shelter, and have the parents of these kids come there and you'd have to talk to their parents, have to talk to the parents of these younger kids. Because these kids, they're not gonna be conducive to upholding the good standards of the community if they don't have the right direction…so they would have to sit down and talk to these parents, they have to sit down and talk to these parents, say "Look, you guys have to buck up, tighten up on your kids." You have to give them notice. "You have to tighten up with your kids. If you need help, let us know because they've got counselors out there."

He proposed these meetings take place once or twice a month. One feature of this idea was the approach to parents; instead of mandating that parents attend such trainings, a coercive strategy, Charles' idea would forge a partnership between parents and what he referred to as "civic leaders." Zora's position as day care provider in the neighborhood brought her into contact with many parents. She observed deficits in the skills of her ward's parents and wanted to "bring in more people that can help the parents with literature and knowin' what it is that they're supposed to do." Known to many as "The Baby Whisperer," Zora had tremendous rapport with children and valuable skills that could be tapped to help struggling parents overcome personal parenting deficits. One senior pointed to a gap in thinking about parenting training, noting "a lot of children have parents that's in prisons, a lot of 'em parents are dead because of the shootings and they have grandparents and relatives taking care of these kids and a lot of 'em is not doing what they's supposed to be doing with these kids and these kids is acting up" implying that parenting training might be extended to caretakers thrust into a parenting role due to the neighborhood violence and high incarceration rate.

Another idea for parenting training was noted by Caroline. The City's Health Department created the Hollygrove Best Babies Zone, based upon the Harlem Children's Zone. Caroline told me the program "helps young moms, you know, with children under the age of two. You know they help them probably, help them with GED, help just give 'em information

about how to raise a child." Its location inside the neighborhood improved the likelihood that

young mothers would participate in wraparound services designed to enhance the lives of their

young children, including parenting training. Providing assistance to guardians was thought not

only to provide valuable information to guardians struggling to raise children but also to alleviate

stress experienced by overburdened caretakers. This was seen as a preventative solution to

neighborhood violence.

One final educational strategy was proposed by Ernest, a neighborhood entrepreneur. His

solution to neighborhood violence was to "push it out with education." He envisioned a

neighborhood education strategy designed to help people resist the allure of the street culture:

> Like that guy that was putting out those signs, "Enough is Enough?" I think if they was
> to flood the area, it would resonate. Sometime you got to lay a seed…you might not get
> it instantly, but if it's fed to them constantly. And in the park I think if they had screens
> set up where they could have some people come in and explain about that culture, let
> them know what is really going on. Set up some entertainment, have some cold drinks,
> mingle, and even the police could step in and say, "We're not here to hurt you, we're here
> to help, everybody's going to have to be one society."

His comment about the "Enough is Enough" signs made reference to an initiative by Pastor John

Raphael who created signs with the word "Enough" to decry the high homicide rate in New

Orleans. Ernest's two-pronged, anti-homicide strategy would combine a public relations

campaign of posting signs throughout the neighborhood like those of Pastor Raphael to be

followed by a conscious-raising event at Conrad Playground where the struggle between

prosocial and street values would be explicated and where the police department would seek to

better ally themselves with the community. Unlike the other educational strategies this was

specifically envisioned to target neighborhood violence through a grassroots educational

campaign led by residents in collaboration with the police department.

In sum, educational strategies were proposed to reduce violence in four settings. First were strategies designed to enhance the life chances of neighborhood youth through formal educational institutions. Second were strategies to educate students during the non-school hours when violent youth crime was at its peak. A third set of educational strategies were conceived to assist caretakers in a parental role with the challenging task of raising children. The final strategy was a grassroots program conceived to intervene directly in the neighborhood violence via a public relations campaign coupled with special events to educate residents about the consequences of street violence.

The literature supported the four educational strategies advanced by the residents. Wilson and Lipsey (2005) performed a meta-analysis of school-based violence prevention programs through 2004 and found them to be especially effective with higher risk students who lived in "high poverty, disadvantaged neighborhoods" (p. 25). Webster and Illangasekare (2010) reported positive results of the Aban Aya Youth Project in Chicago which combined an in-school educational curriculum and community support to significantly reduce incidences of violence, provoking behavior, drug use, school delinquency and other risky behaviors.   The After School Alliance (2007) reported that out-of-school time programs have proven effective in both preventing and reducing neighborhood violent crime. Programs they cited included the Bayview (San Francisco) Save Haven program, the California Juvenile Crime Prevention 12-cities Demonstration Project, the Baltimore Police Athletic League, New York City's Boys and Girls Clubs and the Los Angeles BEST program. Greenwood (2010) found four family educational programs that were effective in reducing youth crime and violence. These included the Nurse Family Partnership where registered nurses educate at-risk mothers regarding parenting skills, Functional Family Therapy which provides in-home therapists to educate and support parents,

Guiding Good Choices which promotes healthy, protective parent-child interactions, and the

Strengthening Families Program that enhances parenting, family relationships and teaches

communication skills. Haggerty, McGlynn-Wright and Klima (2013) found two additional

programs to be effective in training parents to reduce children's violence-related behaviors.

These included The Incredible Years, a 22-week group program for parents of children aged

three to six, and Staying Connected with Your Teen, a seven-week program for youth aged 12-

17. Finally, the use of communications and media strategies suggested by Ernest has been

adopted by several violence reduction initiatives including Boston's Ceasefire Program,

Chicago's Cure Violence Program, Project Safe Neighborhoods, and the Drug Market

Intervention Program (McGarrell, Hipple, Bynum, Perez, Gregory, Kane & Ransford, 2013).

These strategies represented a multi-faceted approach to prosocial values transmission.

As seen in an earlier chapter, Hollygrove residents were concerned that positive values were not

being passed to future generations. Each of the four proposed approaches attacked this concern

from different vantage points: in-school, after-school, in the home, and community-wide. In

essence these were battlefronts in the war of values taking place in Hollygrove and were a

comprehensive set of tactics to assure that prosocial values were passed to the next generation.

Formal Control Strategies

The third most commonly mentioned solution to Hollygrove's violence were strategies

that involved agents of formal control. Many residents expressed distrust of the New Orleans

Police Department, while police officials thought they were seen as more like an occupying force

than as partners in the effort to reduce crime. Several respondents expressed novel ideas as to

how this could be changed. While some residents did mention a desire for more agents of formal

control, some suggested that these should not be NOPD officers. Others mentioned strategies related to the police department that could improve the community's relationship with the NOPD.

Hollygrove residents had mixed feelings about formal controls. Silver and Miller (2006) found that residents with strong attachment to the community and who were satisfied with the police had lower levels of legal cynicism and were more likely to exercise informal social controls. Kirk and Papachristos (2011) noted that residents who did not trust agents of formal control, viewing them as illegitimate, unresponsive and uncaring, were more likely to engage in behaviors that ran counter to dominant norms. Hollygrove residents' long experience of structural neglect resulted in a spectrum of cynicism ranging from complete mistrust to a willingness to work cooperatively with agents of law enforcement. This spectrum was reflected in the variety of formal control strategies proffered by residents.

William, a security guard at a local hospital, recommended the neighborhood "hire a security guard company to ride around at night 'cause everybody don't have a car…so some people have to catch the bus and walk home at night." This was a reference to self-taxation programs available to communities in New Orleans for such purposes. Daneta advocated for "getting more state troopers or something, or the military men," referencing a recent effort by the city to supplement flagging numbers of police officers by bringing the Louisiana State Police into the city. There was precedent for this idea; in the years after Katrina the military did patrol the streets setting up checkpoints throughout the city to maintain public safety while Louisiana State Troopers had been deployed in New Orleans' French Quarter to supplement NOPD patrols.

Recognizing the disconnection between the police department and Hollygrove's residents, she advocated hiring officers from the neighborhood:

You want cops, but you want them to be focused on the right thing. You don't want them to be spendin' their time frisking you when the guy is jumpin' out the window. They are comin' from outside. They don't know who is who. I mean there's a disconnection there. We have a very disconnected legal system 'cause they don't know [the neighborhood]. I mean you don't wanna be so biased, but I do think it has to come from within. People try to do that with different things, like Neighborhood Watch teams and all that stuff. Is that really the best we can do here? Would it be too extreme to say the only cops that can serve this neighborhood are cops from this neighborhood? Like what kind of system is that! And the only cops who can serve this neighborhood are cops that live in this neighborhood, cops that actually have to live here and don't have a place to go back to.

Bratton and Kelling's (2006) Broken Windows law enforcement strategy called for rapid and strong reaction to minor offenses in an effort to prevent major offenses from occurring later. The challenge with this type of policing strategy, according to one high-ranking police official was "we put people in jail for any little thing we could." Tamesha's solution would forge greater connections between the police and community residents by placing officers with a vested interest in the community strategically in the communities where they live. Rather than being seen as an occupying force of outsiders these officers would know and care for the community and thus act as allies in the work of community improvement.

Three additional strategies fit with the theme of formal control: a mentoring alliance with the police department, enforcement of loitering laws and the expanded use of crime cameras. Charles' personal brush with youth violence in San Francisco led his mother to enroll him in the Police Activities League (PAL), where his mentor was assigned to "keep you in control," "keep you on the straight and narrow," "report on you," and "keep you in line." The San Francisco PAL provides "civilian and police volunteer coaches and mentors" who serve youth through "a variety of sports and leadership activities" in an effort to "develop personal character and foster positive relationships among police officers, youth and dedicated volunteers" (San Francisco Police Athletic League, n.d.). This program fit with an NOPD official's solution of "enlisting

kids as allies not enemies of the police." A program like the San Francisco PAL combines the community's solution of mentorship and the improvement of relationships with the police department.

Arianne proposed improved enforcement of loitering laws as a solution, saying "they could stop all those people from hanging on the corner." She described a good neighborhood as "a quiet neighborhood, not a lot of people hanging around. Sure not a neighborhood with a corner store, just because they have a lot of people be hanging out like, around good kids that's trying to do good and not be outside terrorizing the neighborhood." Arianne lived most of her life within a half block of the Olive Superette, a hot spot for lethal violence. As a high school student she observed the shooting of Brandon Aggison, a former classmate there. She currently lived in another house that is also a half block from the store, this time with her young son. Her reflection on loitering stemmed from her lived experience there, one that had associated the corner store with both loitering and lethal violence. This would help explain her assumption that enforcement of existing loitering laws would help to reduce violence.

Crime cameras were also mentioned as a formal control solution. John stated, "crime cameras I think are one of the best ones." He had been a part of a program to situate crime cameras in front of private homes, a joint project of the neighborhood's city councilmember, ProjectNOLA, Trinity Christian Community, the Carrollton Hollygrove Community Development Corporation, and the Electrician's Union. These cameras were connected in real-time via the Internet to ProjectNOLA's recording equipment and allowed the NOPD to observe the aftermath of a crime committed in view of the camera. Some Hollygrove residents thought the cameras served to deter violent crime.

These resident solutions were thought to change the polarity of the neighborhood's relationship to formal control agencies. In the years prior to the study the power arrangement between the NOPD and Hollygrove residents was unequally balanced, where the police controlled the playing field. They were viewed as unresponsive and unable to ensure Hollygrove's safety, conditions which Kirk and Papachristos (2011) concluded breed legal cynicism and adherence to oppositional subcultural values. Hollygrove's solutions sought to rearrange that balance by allowing residents to collaborate with policing strategies affecting the neighborhood. This was consistent with Saville's (2009) SafeGrowth model where community safety was enhanced as agents of formal control cooperated with residents to enact a conjoint planning process that prioritized neighborhood concerns. As the balance of power shifts back to the community, concluded Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls (1997), residents were more likely to exert greater collective efficacy, to attract more police participation, and to reduce murders. This had important implications for law enforcement officers as well; as agents of formal control engaged residents, distrust was lessened, resident cooperation was enhanced, and neighborhood violence was reduced.

Hollygrove's City Councilperson stated, "when the people take responsibility for their neighborhood and let the police know that they are going to hold them responsible to do their jobs in the neighborhood, then the police are much more likely to step up to the plate." This comment reflected her growing realization that the power arrangement had begun to shift from the police as an "occupying force" to one where the police served and were accountable to the community residents. Until the agents of formal control were willing to act in partnership with the community, serving them instead of exercising control, the legal cynicism would continue

and the relationship between Hollygrove residents and the NOPD would be hostile. Residents in

this study desired an equitable working relationship as reflected by these strategies.

Quality of Life Strategies

A fourth theme found in neighborhood-driven solutions to violence revolved around the

quality of life issues in the community. One former resident now in city government remarked,

"if you start to see an improvement in the quality of life, then you'll start to see an improvement

in the overall life of an individual that lives back in Hollygrove." Skogan's (1990) work on

neighborhood disorder was reflected in a training offered by one of Hollygrove's crime

consultants during the Livable Communities Program where leaders were taught techniques of

Second Generation Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (Saville, 2009). In this

model residents and NOPD officers were first taught about the connection between visible

disorder and crime and then jointly took a walking tour of a section of Hollygrove to connect

visible disorder to several crime hot spots. This marked a turning point in the neighborhood's

understanding that prevention of crime and enforcement of laws were separate concepts, not

always related. These strategies reflected resident's opinions on the importance of quality of life

issues as a solution to neighborhood violence.

Several respondents asserted that part of Hollygrove's violence reduction strategy must

address the abundance of vacant, blighted and abandoned homes and lots that proliferate

throughout the neighborhood, marking it as a place where owners did not care about the

community. Caroline noted "they got a lot of abandoned houses, a lot of empty lots. Getting

people to build houses, build more property, houses on their property would kind of make it

safer, having some people coming, some nice, decent people coming to the neighborhood, to

kind of keep the neighborhood up to par." Eldridge wanted to see "abandoned houses that

nobody reclaimed since Katrina either torn down or remodeled." The number of blighted houses

increased after Katrina as some residents and landlords chose not to rebuild because the flooding

and subsequent mold infestation made repairs cost prohibitive. One of the seniors thought that:

> somebody, the city, somebody in the government should be taking care of this so that you
> could either board it up or allow somebody to buy it at a cheap price because it's not
> doing anything but sitting. It's drawing not only the kids with the bad habits, birds,
> animals, different things. And what is that doing to the neighborhood? People want to
> have good and [instead] have too much of that." Another senior added, "they're fixing
> all the downtown houses, they're not fixing anything back here.

The City Councilmember wanted to "get those properties that are blighted and abandoned back

on the market," believing that if "the houses were fixed up the neighborhood would be healed."

Besides bringing disorder to the community, vacant, blighted and abandoned houses sometimes

served as staging areas for crime. The district police commander noted that the neighborhood

blight "creates havens for any type of illegal activity" and "by knocking that stuff out it's really

helping us reduce crime. The residents, politician and police agreed that blight eradication must

be a part of the neighborhood's crime reduction strategy.

Two respondents noted the poor quality of Hollygrove's streets and suggested street

repairs would serve to reduce neighborhood violence. When asked what she would do with

unlimited funds to fix the community Caroline answered "the streets are really bad, streets are

bad, fix the streets up." The City Councilmember addressed this as well, pointing to "blight

reduction and fixing the streets" as elements critical to the neighborhood's well-being. Unlike

wealthier neighborhoods, the streets of Hollygrove were in disrepair. There were few curbs,

many cracks and potholes, and in places the street grade was higher than the adjacent yards

which caused flooding during heavy rains.

Two other quality of life issues mentioned by respondents were trash collection and the state of neighborhood parks. As we sat on Bert's porch overlooking Olive Street, across from the Olive Superette, he stated:

> It's just like the garbage people, they make the community look bad, look on the street, they don't even want to pick this up. So they make our community look bad because they leave it on the, they leave it out here and won't even try to pick it up…you can look at every time people put their stuff [trash] out, you don't even try to pick it up. They don't send nobody to pick it up. That makes the community look bad also. You know if they'd clean that up, it would be pretty decent. Lot of people going to look at a house, you don't look at a house like with that stuff out there like that.

He was referring to several piles of trash on the curb in front of houses abutting Olive Street. The city's Sanitation Department would often delay collecting trash that was not in city-approved trash receptacles. This marred the neighborhood, sending messages about the community's lack of political and social capital, adding to the perception that Hollygrove residents did not care about their community.

Neighborhood parks served as gathering places for community residents and thus had great potential to benefit a community. At the same time parks in a state of disrepair, like poor streets and blighted houses, sent messages about the ability of the community to exercise collective efficacy and disorder, thus impacting neighborhood violence. Eldridge mentioned parks as a way of making Hollygrove safer:

> I think they could have more parks. I mean like really well-maintained parks. You know stuff that people come in and keep and maintained and keep a high quality. I mean every time you see a park they got like spray paint all over the walls and the water fountains are broken and stuff like that. People don't value anything like that. They need to have something where people can value. You know, a lot of lights at night time and that kind of thing, that kind of helps.

Eldridge's solution asserted that well-maintained parks could be a community asset only when adequately maintained.

The way interviewees thought about neighborhood disorder was consistent with Skogan's (1990) finding that physical disorder connected to social disorder and created an environment in which criminals were free to act. Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) connected disorder and violent crime but found that physical disorder's destabilizing effect was an artifact of institutional abandonment of inner city neighborhoods and the lack of resident collective efficacy. The proposed quality of life solutions reflected the understanding that a community's visible disrepair mirrors a less visible reality, their lack of social capital relative to better resourced neighborhoods. Because a well-maintained neighborhood signals a neighborhood's political and social capital, it sends messages about its ability to control those who would harm it. Caroline stated this fact clearly; when asked why she thought quality of life improvements would deter violence, she concluded "the people that's doing the crime will see that the community, that the people love the community and will speak out." These voices recognize the need for more community empowerment in maintaining Hollygrove's infrastructure.

Economic Strategies

The final set of solutions considered economic strategies thought to be an important component of violence reduction. Institutional Anomie Theory (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997) is predicated upon the concept that institutional structures preventing economic goal attainment in the formal economy gave rise to anomie. To resolve this condition an informal economy emerged, with the concomitant increase in violent crime. The 20-something males stated clearly their perceptions that poverty was linked to violent crime. In this exchange they make this connection explicit:

M1:   But me personally, the underlying cause to a lot of violence is poverty.

K: Talk about that.

M1:   Meaning, it's poverty, like, we uh, all of us broke, all of us got problems, we sit around and talk about our problems all day and we only know a few ways to solve 'em. Selling drugs, either getting a job, a bad paying job, 'cause the people don't want to hire no black people.

M2:   Robbing someone

M1:   or we go rob.

M3:   it's the only way some people…

M1:   so that's where the killing and stuff come from, 'cause poverty is the underlying cause.

The preceding exchange with the focus group members implied agreement with this theory.

Residents stated that economic opportunities were lacking in Hollygrove. This led

several residents to note that ameliorating this condition might be an important solution to the

neighborhood's violent crime. Tameka's solution was employment:

Jobs that pay a decent wage where men are able to take care of their families. Jobs that pay enough where they can be a homeowner. Just basic, not extravagant things. Own a home, buy a car to get back and forth to work, to provide a good education for your children…And those jobs need to have a living wage, benefits, disability insurance, health insurance, all those things are important.

While many thought that jobs were available to Hollygrove's residents, these jobs were thought

to be insufficient with regard to pay and benefits.

Others pointed to the need for economic drivers of jobs, employers capable of providing

livable wage jobs with benefits. One former resident stated "we have to provide some more type

of economic opportunity [like] Costco's and the other org (sic), the other companies that have

come to Carrollton over the years and provided some employment." Caroline added, "Costco,

got this new grocery store, Costco. Well I think it changed a whole lot, you know? Um, I not

sure, they probably gave some of the people in the neighborhood jobs, you know more

employment in the neighborhood." Costco Wholesale chose a strip mall, abandoned since Katrina, for their first Louisiana location. This proved to be a significant development in three ways: it replaced a blighted structure, it provided an economic engine, and it offered jobs to neighborhood residents. During a series of pre-construction meetings with the community, Costco executives told residents that their warehouses drove further economic development in many communities where they were located. This development provided a much-needed boost to neighborhood morale and, if the executives' narrative proves correct, had potential to drive future economic improvements.

Another source of economic opportunity mentioned by residents was legal entrepreneurship. The community's informal economy pointed to the reality that a neighborhood entrepreneurial spirit existed and could be redirected into legitimate business ventures. Zora, a neighborhood day care provider and seamstress said:

> Everyone is born with some type of creativity—everyone, it's just a thought process and not bein' lazy. We have a lot of bright people in this world, but we just need to get up off our butts and do what we need to do, you know? What I'm doin' didn't come from goin' to school or somebody tellin' me what to do. It came from, as a child, wantin' at some point to be married and have kids that I decided when I was young I was gonna sew. I started makin' my clothes at 12. It goes back to not havin' places to go to learn what we need to learn, so you have to be self-taught sometimes. It goes back to not bein' lazy. You just need to do what you need to do to take care of your family, take care of yourself. I used to sew for my mom, I used to do my mom's hair. My mom used to do hair for everyone in the neighborhood, so a lot of that is instilled in me. Things that are instilled in you as a child you cannot get rid of. That's just the bottom line. Some of the days when everyone's layin' around sleepin', I think I would like to do that one day. And then I get up off my butt and say, I would not want to do that because that's sleeping time away. We have enough hours in the night to sleep and do what you have to do and get up in the morning then do what you have to do, and [so] you go to bed early at night. Of course, that didn't happen for me. I still get up early in the mornings and do what I have to do because you have more time in the mornings than you do in the evenings.

There were entrepreneurs in the neighborhood. Some like Zora, who was a seamstress and daycare provider, and Ernest, who silk-screened t-shirts, earned a decent income by providing

valuable products and services to the community via the formal economy. Others, like the neighborhood drug dealers, created and maintained a marketplace in the underground economy. Zora recognized the inherent creativity of many in the community, a dormant resource that, if translated into entrepreneurial participation in the formal economy, could become economic engines that bridge the gap for those currently limited from the formal marketplace.

Institutional Anomie Theory is predicated upon the tenet that economic lack drives anomie and crime. Hollygrove residents recognized this and provided three economic solutions: jobs, economic engines, and entrepreneurship. There had been some hopeful developments in Hollygrove on the economic front with the arrival of Costco and the development of the Hollygrove Market and Farm. Furthermore, as the examples of Zora and Ernest showed, the neighborhood had untapped entrepreneurial potential that could also drive the neighborhood's formal economy.

Summary

While many solutions to neighborhood violence were modeled upon the best practices in other places, residents in Hollygrove provided solutions based on the strengths of their neighborhood. Many of the solutions they proposed were innovative and, when combined, could comprise a comprehensive solution to neighborhood violence. One city official, in the Mayor's office, noted "we can't create a generic solution to murder. We have to create a solution that is appropriate for the individuals that are being most affected and too, in specific neighborhoods." Hollygrove resident solutions mirrored this conclusion, they were neighborhood-based and envisioned to target the specific problems that residents perceived to undergird homicide in the

community, and thus merited consideration as a vital part of efforts to eradicate neighborhood-level violence.

There was a common thread to the solutions; they stemmed from the neighborhood's recognition of their marginalized status and reflected their desire to reorganize the community in ways that resituated power and control. The community strategies were based upon the need to regain control of their community. Each of the proposed community-based solutions provided opportunities for residents to "own" their community, shaping its values, future direction and infrastructure. The educational solutions were values-driven. Residents recognized that the emerging subculture was accompanied by values that ran counter to the mainstream and thus their strategies were designed to both remedy the lack of prosocial values transmission and to enhance residents' opportunities to increase their social capital. The formal control solutions were conflict-oriented and emerged from recognition that existing policing strategies had failed to eradicate crime and adequately protect Hollygrove's residents. These strategies demanded that formal controls reshape their agenda to reflect long-neglected priorities of the community and forge cooperative and collaborative relationships with agents of formal control. The quality of life proposals addressed systemic and institutional neglect. By calling for infrastructure repair and an equal share of city resources, residents expressed a desire for remediation of their marginalization relative to better resourced neighborhoods. The final set of resident-driven solutions recognized that economic disadvantage had given rise to an illicit economy which limited the life chances of vulnerable residents. Their desire for economic opportunity stemmed from the harsh reality that Hollygrove's median household income of $32,695 was only 43% of the citywide average of $74,596 (Greater New Orleans Community Data Center). Barring change of this circumstance some residents had few prosocial choices for economic survival and

therefore residents worried that the confluence of drugs and violence would continue to plague their community.

The conflation of race and social pathology (Gregory, 1998) had become a dominant trope used to justify marginalization was not lost on residents of Hollygrove. As evidenced by the wealth of solutions they advanced, there was a willingness to combat their marginalized status. Bourgois (2003) wrote "complex cultural and social dimensions that extend far beyond material and logistical requirements have to be addressed by poverty policies if the socially marginal in the United States are ever going to be able to demand, and earn, the respect that mainstream society needs to share with them for its own good" (p. 324). Hollygrove's solutions, no matter how beneficial and efficacious they were, could not be implemented until institutional structures that had marginalized the community recognized their merit and ceded a measure of autonomy and power to those who sought their own well-being.

Race and poverty cannot be conflated with a lack of resourcefulness. Communities like Hollygrove have the potential to generate myriad solutions to long-entrenched social problems. The deficit they experienced was not one of ideas or will, it was social capital and power. Empowering them to generate and implement innovative homicide reduction solutions had potential to build collective efficacy, reduce legal cynicism and open a new front in the battle to reduce neighborhood homicide.

Chapter 11

Discussion

Introduction

Current American discourses that conflate blackness with poverty and danger brand inner city communities such as Hollygrove with malignant labels that do not adequately address the complexities of life there. Dominant societal tropes serve to marginalize such communities ignoring the strength of the people and their talent for coping with inequity. Rather than addressing the situational structures that give rise to Hollygrove and other neighborhoods, it is simpler to construct explanations focused upon individual pathology. Lee (1977) called this the fundamental attribution error, where internal psychological traits of others are used to explain their choices rather than external, structural conditions. Applying Lee's reasoning to a neighborhood context helps to clarify why pathology lenses rather than situational ones are employed to brand inner-city dwellers as bad actors rather than victims of structural neglect. Such explanations limit the ability of residents to act in their own best interests while justifying interventions that disempower and render them helpless, creating further marginality.

Meanwhile there were significant assets in the community, an untapped and entrepreneurial wealth of solutions to neighborhood problems, and an uncommon type of strength engendered from years of learning to cope with overwhelming obstacles. McKnight and Kretzmann (2002) note "there is rich potential waiting to be identified and contributed by even the most marginalized people" (p. 160) but it is often overlooked because of the dominance of deficiency-oriented social service models focused upon needs rather than assets. Far from helpless dependents, Hollygrove residents developed innovative strategies to actively overcome structural limitations and survive in what appears to them to be a hostile society outside the

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neighborhood boundaries. A complex subculture emerged that, while appearing to be oppositional and defiant to outsiders, was adaptive. Residents in the neighborhood possessed a unique talent for negotiating between the values of mainstream society and the rules of the neighborhood, a bi-cultural ability which is akin to speaking two languages. Hollygrove has much to teach about resilience for those willing to shun paternalistic policies and act as her students.

This study began with three primary theoretical lenses through which neighborhood-level homicide could be understood. Social Disorganization Theory, especially Sampson's (2012) concept of collective efficacy, attempted to explain the ways communities organize themselves to either defend against or allow lethal violence. Subcultural theories such as Anderson's (1999) street codes helped to elucidate the unique challenges faced by inner city residents who operate in two, often divergent milieus. The Institutional Anomie Theory of Messner and Rosenfeld (1997) linked the expectations of economic success in a capitalist economy with participation in the informal economy that often marks central city neighborhoods. While all of these were present in the participants' understanding of neighborhood lethal violence, none was individually sufficient to capture the breadth of the experience. The data found a complex interplay of conditions that, when combined, better explicate the factors undergirding homicide in communities such as Hollygrove.

Themes that Emerged from the Data

The five themes emerging from the data are summarized in Table 3 below. This chapter will attempt to situate these findings in light of existing theories and relevant studies. One of the challenges addressed in this study was the inability of macrosociological research to explain the

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variations in lethal violence within an individual neighborhood like Hollygrove. Homicide is unevenly distributed throughout structurally disadvantaged communities. Therefore, a body of research exploring intra-neighborhood variations in lethal violence may help to bridge the gap between macrosociological explanations and individual explanations. The intentional focus of this study upon an individual neighborhood is one attempt to connect agency-based and social-structural based understandings of homicide.

The five themes and related subthemes summarized in Table 3 are interconnected and suggest that Hollygrove's structural marginalization was reflected in the experiences of neighborhood residents. The neighborhood portrayed its marginalization via a values-orientation, a clash between the values of mainstream society and those that have arisen inside the neighborhood, and a boundary-orientation, mistrust or acceptance of outsiders. Rather than being dichotomous, residents experienced the values clash along a continuum with prosocial values at one pole and subcultural values at the other. Homeowners and those who were able to participate in the formal economy lay toward the prosocial value-oriented pole, while those who participated in the informal economy were oriented toward the other. At the same time most in the neighborhood differentiated between those whose primary identification was with the neighborhood, or insiders, and those who did not, the outsiders. This spectrum of attitudes toward insiders and outsiders manifested in either porous boundaries and trust of outsiders or rigid boundaries and mistrust of outsiders. Finally, because residents understood their marginalization via these lenses, they were able to consider innovative solutions to lethal violence that may be overlooked by those observing the neighborhood from outside.

Table 4: Themes and Sub-Themes Emerging from the Data

Hollygrove is Deteriorating: **Hollygrove's Values at the Crossroads**	*Keeping It Real:* **Living Outside Prosocial Values in Hollygrove**	*What Prompts People to Kill is Drugs:* **The Connection between Drugs and Violence**	*Strangers in the Neighborhood:* **Hollygrove's View of Outsiders**	*The Difference is Me:* **Grassroots Solutions to the Problem of Lethal Violence**
A Lost Generation: Failure to Transmit Pro-Social Values	"Outchere": Life in Hollygrove's Street Subculture	It All Started with Drugs: Drug-related Violence in Hollygrove	It's the People from Outside: Resident Feelings toward Outsiders	Community-based Strategies
A Place where You Can Trust Your Neighbors: The Waning Ethic of Caring	The Rules of Keeping It Real	Only when the Store is Open: ABOs and Violent Crime	We're Gonna Fight That: Outsiders as Agents of Change	Educational Strategies
Raised to be Productive: Work Ethic in Peril	Status in the Keeping It Real Subculture	Their Only Funds was to Sell Drugs: Economic Considerations		Formal Control Strategies
Homeowners Care More: Loss of Pride of Ownership	Succumbing to the Keeping It Real Subculture	More Like an Occupying Force: Formal and Informal Controls		Quality of Life Strategies
They Use Violence to Solve Problems: A Lack of Pro-Social Conflict Resolution Skills	Resisting the Keeping It Real Subculture			Economic Strategies

Hollygrove's historical disadvantage and marginalization was reflected in residents' complex dance with prosocial cultural values, described by Anderson (1999) as street and decent codes. Anderson's explanation, however, implied that these values are discrete entities, while the data emerging from this study indicate that all residents understood and subscribed to the

primacy of prosocial values but were forced by the exigencies of life in an urban neighborhood to adopt to subcultural values. Browning, Feinberg and Dietz (2004) used the term "negotiated coexistence" to help explain the complex interplay of neighborhood values regarding participants in the informal economy. In their model offenders experience enhanced social capital when residents empathize with the structural challenges leading to their participation in the illicit economy. Negotiated coexistence might be extended to explain how, at all points on the spectrum of values-orientation, there was an understanding of those whose values were oriented differently. This poses a challenge for outsiders trying to understand communities like Hollygrove. The neighborhood's internal organization was manifested in strong collective efficacy which social disorganization theorists theorized should lead to lower homicide rates (Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls, 1997; Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999; Morenoff, Sampson & Raudenbush, 2001; Sampson, 2012). However, the neighborhood was organized differently than these authors envisioned, oriented primarily toward prosocial values while also negotiating between two value systems that reflected the adaptive response of a marginalized community (Venkatesh, 2006, 2008; Bourgois, 2003; Bourgois & Schonberg, 2009). At times, such as 2012, the community experienced both high collective efficacy and high homicide, a situation that St. Jean (2007) found was made possible when neighborhood factors other than collective efficacy and informal social controls are considered.

Hollygrove residents' values-orientation was one of those factors. Much like a second generation immigrant who simultaneously holds the mores of a culture of origin while adaptively donning new mores during encounters with the culture of adoption, Hollygrove residents exhibited bi-cultural ability to shift between competing values systems. A similar dance occurs when one marries and must negotiate between the values of a birth family and those of their

spouse's. Hollygrove residents framed this negotiated coexistence in three ways. First, they differentiated between outsiders and insiders. Second, they asserted that guns and violence were imposed upon them by outsiders. Finally, they resisted formal controls and political processes judged to be acting upon them rather than collaborating with them. What appeared to be legal cynicism (Kirk & Papachristos, 2011; Kirk & Matsuda, 2011) to those looking at the neighborhood from outside was actually a very complicated, multicultural response to structural limitations imposed on them.

While residents subscribed to prosocial values to a greater or lesser extent depending upon their involvement in the Keeping It Real subculture and reliance upon the illicit economy for income, they were not blind to the fact that these values were defined by an outside society. Messner and Rosenfeld's (1997) Institutional Anomie Theory posits twin forces underlying urban crime: the assimilation of the black community into prosocial values glorifying financial success and the alienation of young black men from institutionally sanctioned success pathways. Even as residents recognized the primacy of prosocial values for success, they also observed that pathways to success, such as livable wage jobs, quality education, economic attainment and non-economic social institutions, were limited. Baumer and Gustafson (2007) found this condition fosters instrumental homicide at the neighborhood level. At the same time, federal government policies have deconstructed many of the social safety net elements that were designed to mitigate against such limitations.   Several authors noted that the presence of a social safety net served to reduce the likelihood of neighborhood homicide (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997; Savolainen, 2000; Maume & Lee, 2003) by easing the impact of structural limitations upon the most vulnerable. Holding to prosocial values was challenging for residents under these conditions. Imposed marginalization, whether it derives from the formal economy or from federal welfare policy,

strained their identification with prosocial societal values and may help explain the continuum of values embraced by residents.

For some financial survival necessitated choices that violated privately held convictions, an anguishing condition in which some residents succumb to the rules of Keeping It Real and/or the illicit economy while others sympathize, yet resist. Sampson and Wilson (1995) noted such circumstances give rise to an environment where "crime, disorder and drug use are less than fervently condemned and hence [are] expected as part of everyday life" (p. 50). Indeed, Hollygrove residents recognized the values of the Keeping It Real subculture were non-normative and also considered them to be detrimental to both the well-being of the actors and to the community. Even those who were participants maintained convictions that the lifestyle was destructive on both the individual and neighborhood levels. Sampson and Wilson's conclusion implies that residents' failure to exert informal controls served as tacit approval of the subculture. The residents of Hollygrove would disagree, asserting instead that the illicit economy is a destructive force imposed upon them by economic realities in a milieu where formal and political controls have failed to act collaboratively with the community to combat those forces. Their negotiated coexistence with the subculture and the illicit economy reflected their awareness of their marginalization.

In the face of such abandonment residents had little choice but to resign themselves to the negotiated coexistence of life with an illicit economy where the incentives for participation outweighed those in the formal economy (Bourgois, 2003). It is in this context that the subcultural rules of the street begin to organize life in the community (Anderson, 1999). An oppositional status hierarchy emerged in Hollygrove where violence was portrayed as a vehicle for establishing social identity, respect and social control (Kubrin, 2005) as aggrandized in the

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0017th video *The Zoo.* The Hood Star became the pinnacle of success inside the neighborhood, where strength and street credibility required retaliatory violence to establish dominance but also subjected those at the top to increased risk of lethality (Berg, Stewart, Schreck & Simons, 2012). Legal cynicism, the "cultural orientation in which the law and agents of its enforcement are viewed as illegitimate, unresponsive, and ill-equipped to ensure public safety" (Kirk & Papachristos, 2011, p.1191) became a more prominent feature of the neighborhood as Hollygrove shifted toward broader adoption of street codes. This further diminished the neighborhood's willingness to cooperate with the second district of the NOPD (Kirk & Matsuda, 2011), leading two police officials to assert that they were seen as an occupying force rather than cooperative participants in the fight against lethal neighborhood violence. In Hollygrove violent behavior had become an instrumental tool for developing street credibility and enhancing one's reputation among peers (Wilkinson, 2003). Thus studies that connect lethality with subcultural theories were helpful in explaining the high murder rate in the neighborhood.

After Hurricane Katrina residents reported a reduction of legal cynicism as the demographics of the neighborhood changed. The first residents to return were primarily older homeowners with a financial stake in the community. Unlike families with children, they were not required to enroll their children in schools located in the communities to which they had evacuated. This freed them to return with the first wave of evacuees. The data from this study indicated that homeowners and senior citizens were more oriented toward prosocial values and were more likely to be engaged in community betterment projects, both conditions in which collective efficacy or "social cohesion combined with shared expectations for social control" (Samson, 2012, p. 27) could flourish.

In this context a unique window of opportunity emerged in which community residents experienced a willingness to work collaboratively to rebuild their neighborhood and to allow outside resources access to the community. Many of these early returners were trained by the neighborhood community development corporation to serve as block captains who were able to direct subsequent waves of returning evacuees to resources critical for rebuilding. A neighborhood planning charrette was conducted during which residents were allowed to envision an improved neighborhood, under the guidance of an architect, two city planners and a newly-minted community development corporation. The preponderance of senior citizens facilitated the adoption of the Hollygrove by AARP as a laboratory for the Livable Communities Pilot Project. The project trained them in leadership skills, identified their neighborhood priorities, and secured financial and physical resources to implement them. One of the identified priorities was a reduction in lethal violence, a goal that AARP helped resource by identifying crime hot spots and securing much-needed training in crime prevention. The collective efforts of involved residents led to the closure of Big Time Tips, the identified epicenter of neighborhood violence, and a subsequent reduction in neighborhood lethal violence.

Braga, Welsh & Schnell (2015) found that community problem-solving approaches resulted in a neighborhood's ability to work cohesively to reduce crime, while Saville (2009) proposed that when residents "create and regulate their own safety in collaboration with service providers such as planners and police" (p. 390) an environment emerges in which crime prevention can occur. Collective efficacy is hindered in an environment where concentrated disadvantage coexists with large scale marginalization. In such an atmosphere, distrust and cynicism is directed toward outsiders while internally residents realize neither social cohesion nor shared expectations for social control. On the other hand, when outside agents work

collaboratively with a community, cynicism is reduced and residents are freed to exercise informal control. When agents of formal control, the NOPD and the city councilperson recognized Hollygrove residents as equal participants in their own betterment, ceding a measure of autonomy to engaged residents, collective efficacy was allowed to flourish and lethal violence was effectively reduced.

St. Jean (2007) noted that it is possible for conditions of low crime and low collective efficacy to coexist. This occurs because neighborhood-level violence is differentially concentrated at corner stores, bars and gathering places rather than being dispersed evenly throughout the community. Hollygrove residents understood this and were able, with the help of the Livable Communities Project, to both pinpoint the location of these hotspots and bring them to the attention of formal control agents. Their training in 2nd Generation CPTED, which was also attended by police officers, empowered them to recognize the difference between crime prevention and law enforcement. Prevention is organic and is a product of neighborhood collective efforts to ameliorate conditions which give rise to violence, before it occurs. Enforcement reacts to crimes that have already occurred. This distinction helped both Hollygrove residents and the police officers attending the training understand the power of collective efficacy and collective action, especially when combined with collaboration by agents of formal control. Neighborhood residents who once found refuge in the blocks without violence, a condition of low crime and low collective efficacy, were equipped to act in ways that reduced violence in neighborhood crime hotspots beyond their block.

Structural marginalization hampers neighborhood collective efficacy by limiting access to social capital and formal power. Without adequate resources community actors have limited ability to exert informal controls in ways that prevent violence from occurring. Residents who

subscribe predominately to prosocial values cannot combat armed subcultural actors willing to enforce their alternative values and street codes with lethal violence. Collective efficacy is limited, therefore, without the cooperation of formal structures. Macrosociological attempts to explain neighborhood violence via a lack of informal social controls and collective efficacy have difficulty addressing these subtle neighborhood dynamics.

Hollygrove's violence cannot be understood through a single theoretical lens. The structures that maintained neighborhood violence were complex and multi-faceted. While Social Disorganization theory can help to explain the interconnections between a lack of collective efficacy and violence it fails to account for conditions where low crime and low collective efficacy coexist. Institutional Anomie theory is helpful for understanding how economic realities give rise to conditions where an illicit economy and accompanying lethal violence co-occur but fails to adequately address the neighborhood dynamics that both maintain it and fail to combat it. Subcultural theories are adept at describing both the conflicting values held by those whose lived reality forces them to shift between codes and the milieu in which they live but fails to adequately address how a neighborhood might change its course and shift its values-orientation. Elements of each are explanatory and conjointly they do much to explain violence in Hollygrove and offer avenues for intervention.

Neighborhood empowerment need not be preceded by widespread devastation which requires completely rebuilding a neighborhood's physical and social infrastructure. The lesson of Hollygrove is that residents recognized their marginality, saw the devastation wrought by well-intentioned policies that maintained it, had solutions for substantive change, but needed political and social capital to better equip them to enact those solutions. To realize collective efficacy and change their situation required an uncommon willingness by agents of formal

control to collaborate with resident efforts directed toward systemic change. Their success has potential to be a best practice for neighborhood revitalization and lethal violence prevention.

Three Constructs Key to Understanding Homicide in Hollygrove

In the final analysis three constructs were key to understanding the variable rates of homicide in Hollygrove: resident values, social structure, and boundary flexibility (figure 21). Each of these was in a constant state of flux and tension, moving in either prosocial or oppositional directions. As the community's values shifted toward the mainstream, when they experienced enhanced social capital, and as the community allowed more input from outsiders, homicides decreased. When the community embraced countercultural values, experienced social marginalization, and retrenched from relationships with outsiders, homicides increased.
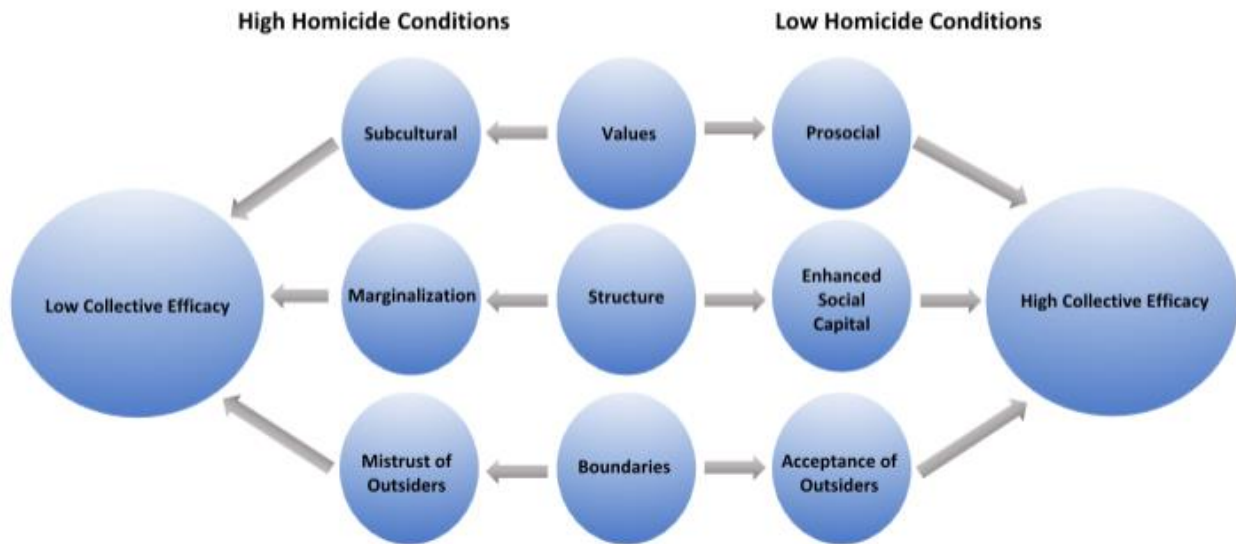

Figure 21. Neighborhood constructs affecting high and low homicide conditions in Hollygrove

Although all residents in the study embraced prosocial values, there was constant tension with countercultural values. This was consistent with Anderson's (1999) findings regarding street and decent codes that showed how inner-city residents constantly negotiated between them. At any point in the neighborhood's history one of these value sets were in ascendency. When countercultural values dominated, the neighborhood experienced higher homicide rates. As those who held primarily to prosocial values garnered more informal control, the homicide rates decreased. This extends Anderson's theory of individual code shifting to a mezzosociological, or intra-neighborhood, perspective. The code shifting did not occur solely at an individual level but also at the neighborhood level.

At the same time the study's respondents described structural conditions ranging from social marginalization to one of enhanced social capital. During periods of marginalization residents described cynicism toward agents of formal control while the police described their relationship with the community as an occupying force. This coincided with higher homicide conditions. When the city councilmember and the police force began to work cooperatively with local residents, cynicism ebbed, the neighborhood's social capital improved, and the number of homicides diminished. This finding blends the conclusions of Institutional Anomie Theory and collective efficacy. Messner and Rosenfeld's (1997) Institutional Anomie Theory concluded that social institutions regulating norms and behavior were harmed when structural marginalization occurred and individuals in the community resisted institutional controls by engaging in countercultural means of financial achievement. Sampson (2012) noted the connection between a neighborhood's structural features and collective efficacy, proposing that homicides decreased as collective efficacy increased and disadvantage decreased. The same structural conditions that gave rise to the Keeping It Real subculture and the illicit economy, the advanced marginality

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described by Wacquant (2008), were connected to higher homicide. As structural marginality decreased the homicides decreased as well.

Finally, community residents' attitudes toward outsiders impacted either rising or falling homicide rates. In an atmosphere of structural marginalization, a siege mentality developed and the neighborhood boundaries became more rigid. Outsiders were met with mistrust and this extended both to those perceived to be harmful to the neighborhood and to those who expressed a desire to help. As described earlier, in an atmosphere of cynicism and mistrust it can be difficult to differentiate between the two. The result was generalized mistrust of all outsiders. At the other end of this spectrum were the experiences of those involved in collaborative action with the police, politicians, and outside agencies that brought critical rebuilding resources. As this occurred the neighborhood boundaries became more porous and residents expressed greater acceptance of outsiders. More porous neighborhood boundaries were associated with lower homicide while increasing rigidity was associated with higher homicide rates. Bourgois (2003), Venkatesh (2006, 2008) and Anderson (1999) hinted at this reality as they described how neighborhoods became places where residents involved in the subculture and/or the illicit economy experience limitations beyond their community's borders. Sampson (2012) also connected neighborhood boundaries to concentrated disadvantage and geographic isolation. This study extends those findings by submitting that the flexibility of these boundaries is also a factor helping to explain variable rates of homicide.

Implications of the Findings

There are several implications of these findings. First, high homicide neighborhoods do not share a monolithic set of values. Residents recognized the primacy of prosocial values while

simultaneously acknowledging that others exist. Their ability to negotiate between the two was a highly adaptive response akin to new immigrants shifting between the language and customs of their country-of-origin and their adopted homeland. Successful adaptation for an immigrant, as for residents of Hollygrove, required being able to successfully negotiate the two. Hollygrove residents, and by implication those in similar neighborhoods, have strategies to negotiate successfully between competing value systems. At the same time, prosocial values were considered important for connecting to society beyond Hollygrove's borders. Strategies that encourage the transmission and adoption of decent, prosocial codes may decrease marginalization by fostering greater connection between the neighborhood and the rest of the city. The implication is that prosocial values transmission is one key to reducing neighborhood homicide.

Second, the structural marginalization of neighborhoods like Hollygrove gives rise to conditions of higher homicide. The neighborhood's alienation from the city resulted in cynicism which played out in mistrust of the police and politicians. In this environment the relationship between Hollygrove and the city's structure became oppositional. With enhanced cooperation, as power structures recognized the validity and efficacy of resident agendas for their community, social capital improved and residents were willing to work collaboratively toward community improvement. The unique window provided by Katrina's devastation showed that collaborative efforts were possible, but required agents of formal control to engage local residents. Top-down solutions for homicide, those that are imposed by outside agencies instead of emanating from residents, are likely to foster opposition and cynicism. This points to two important considerations. First, when those in power are willing to cede a measure of autonomy to residents, conditions conducive to homicide reduction occur. Second, solutions that reflect

resident agendas and incorporate their innovative ideas as part of any homicide solution, are more likely to succeed. In short, improving the social capital of a marginalized community creates conditions conducive to lower homicide rates.

Third, there was an important interrelationship between Hollygrove's values and social structure that affected the openness of neighborhood boundaries and thus affected homicide. Wellman (1971) described urban neighborhood boundaries in terms of push and pull; while structural limitations gave rise to inner-city, African American neighborhoods and pushed residents into them, there was comfort and meaningful interactions that pulled residents to them as well. These factors served to define and differentiate the neighborhood relative to others in the city. Although some in Wellman's study achieved sufficient capital to negotiate the world beyond the neighborhood, it remained a place of comfort into which they could retreat. Hollygrove residents likewise defined the neighborhood as a meaningful place where the rules and values were legible even when in conflict. It made sense to those who lived there. Outsiders disrupted this legibility and were met with distrust. At the same time rigid boundaries served to maintain the status quo, limiting openness to new ideas and agents. As the boundaries became more porous, made possibly by enhanced social capital and subsequent lessening of cynicism, residents were able to collaborate with police, politicians and outside agencies and act collectively to reduce neighborhood homicide. Boundaries proved to be an important facet of homicide reduction and one promising avenue for future research into neighborhood-level homicide.

In conclusion, Hollygrove teaches that a complex interplay of values, social structure, and boundary porosity impact neighborhood homicides. These served as axes along which the neighborhood oriented itself toward either a prosocial or oppositional direction. As these shifted

in prosocial directions, conditions conducive to homicide decreased. As they moved in oppositional directions the converse occurred. Understanding the relationship between these constructs and their polarity helped to explain variable homicide rates in the neighborhood. Future studies may wish to explore the impact of these constructs upon collective efficacy and homicide, especially the impact of neighborhood boundaries as they move between conditions of rigidly defensive and one of fluidity and receptiveness.

Limitations of the Study

There were sampling, design and scope limitations to this study. The challenge of snowball sampling, as noted by Babbie (2013), is its questionable representativeness. Research employing this technique, as this study did, are designed to be exploratory and therefore caution must be used when attempting to replicate the findings beyond the sample population. The sampling method chosen was purposeful as it represented a wide variety of stakeholders representing the neighborhood. Creswell (2014) noted the limits of an ethnographic approach that is confined to a single, culture-sharing group. On one hand, the author's relationships within the community, forged over many years as a resident and community activist, created valuable inroads that made many of the interviews possible in a neighborhood where trust of outsiders was limited. At the same time, such relationships are based upon insider status, something with potential to skew the results and limit their applicability to other, similar communities. A third limitation was the small sample size of one, bounded neighborhood. Creswell (2014) purported that generalizing results of a study involving a single group is problematic and thus application of these findings beyond Hollygrove may prove difficult. Finally, a unique set of circumstance in Hollygrove were associated with the neighborhood's newfound collective efficacy. Katrina's

complete devastation of the community created a fresh start for a community previously

immersed in conditions leading to subcultural values orientation, advanced marginality, and

cynical attitudes to outsiders. Few similar communities experience opportunity to start fresh as

they did. While this provided a unique perspective from which to study a community's response

to neighborhood homicide, it significantly constrains the findings.

Tamesha, the Hollygrove student who received a full scholarship to a prestigious

northeastern university, described her relationship with Hollygrove this way:

> What would make me, having a family, move back to Hollygrove if I had not been livin'
> in New Orleans for a little minute? I think what it would be is because I would want my
> kids to grown up with the closeness that does come from this neighborhood, you know
> what I mean? Like I could choose to live probably in a suburb somewhere. But it comes
> with, yeah, it's safer, but like as far as the social development of your children, like value
> systems, all those different things—I feel like that is fostered by a community.

Even at its worst, Hollygrove was special to many who lived there. This is an important feature

of many marginalized communities; there are people living in them who value the kinship,

camaraderie, and community they foster. There are sources of strength, important assets and

valuable ideas in these communities, waiting to be tapped. Rather than helpless and hopeless

targets for outside interventions, we could learn much from their residents once their potential is

unlocked through empowering strategies that harness what they know and implement their

uncommon solutions to lethal violence.

Chapter 12

Conclusion

Inner city neighborhoods like Hollygrove are capable of exercising collective efficacy if provided opportunity and the requisite resources to do so. Tamesha's remarks revealed two things that described the lived reality of the neighborhood, "the neighborhood is special" and "social life is different than in a polite neighborhood." Hollygrove was special in several ways: residents with deep roots and strong concern for its well-being, an active corps of leaders willing to take risks to improve the quality of life, wonderful resources that could be enlisted in efforts toward these improvements, and momentum toward that end. Furthermore, the neighborhood has an active social life which was rich and meaningful.

Some outsiders view neighborhoods such as Hollygrove through a lens that conflates race and criminality. From this perspective, homicide interventions may become autocratic as dominant forces seek either to shape such neighborhoods to reflect the values of other, more affluent ones or to control them by raw exercises of power. Such interventions historically served to increase Hollygrove's cynicism which led to both rigid, closed boundaries and oppositional, subcultural values. Instead, strategies that built upon neighborhood wisdom, knowledge, experience, and assets helped to open those boundaries and to empower those who shared prosocial values.

The ancient philosopher Law Tzu is quoted with saying:

Go to the people
Live among them
Learn from them
Love them
Start with what they know
Build on what they have
But of the best leaders

When their task is done
The people will remark
"We have done it ourselves." (Christian Community Development Association, 2012).

Community improvement cannot be something imposed upon a neighborhood; rather it requires engaging local residents, building upon their assets and knowledge, and collaborating to create change. Effective community development leads to improved access to power and power brokers, both necessary elements of neighborhoods with enhanced social capital. One of the key conditions required for homicide reduction in Hollygrove was emerging from marginalization into relationships with politicians, police, and organizations with resources beneficial to the community. Conversely, homicide reduction strategies which do not involve grassroots ideas and solutions may lead to further marginalization and community cynicism. The data from the study suggest, therefore, that community-driven solutions, coupled with the social capital to enact them, may prove more effective than those imposed upon them by well-intentioned technocrats importing ideas that have worked elsewhere. Enhancing social capital within marginalized neighborhoods may prove to be an important homicide reduction strategy.

This study began with the question, "What factors at the neighborhood level contribute to high homicide in New Orleans?" Participants answered this question using three constructs to explain how neighborhood conditions related to homicide: values, structure, and boundary porosity. Enhanced collective efficacy, a condition of low homicide, required a confluence of prosocial values, enhanced social capital, and porous neighborhood boundaries. Diminished collective efficacy was connected to higher homicides and was accompanied by oppositional, subcultural values, structural marginalization, and rigid boundaries. Strategies that improve collective efficacy, therefore, may bolster positive values transmission, enhance neighborhood social capital, and lead to greater acceptance of outsiders.

A second set of questions asked whether the lived experiences of residents and those who have lost loved ones to homicide would reflect the study's theoretical orientations or advance new ones. The three theories central to the study were Social Disorganization theory, Institutional Anomie theory, and subcultural theories. Each of these were present in resident explanations of neighborhood homicide but none was sufficient to explain it.

Weakest among them was anomie theory, which appeared primarily via resident's empathic responses toward those engaging in the underground economy of drug sales. Messner and Rosenfeld (1997) theorized that crime resulted when prosocial pathways to economic success were blocked and unsanctioned ones emerged. Residents made a strong connection between the illicit economy and violence, and did portray structural limitations and economic deprivation as a significant reason for participating in the both the Keeping It Real subculture and the drug market. This was a conflicted view, however, as many simultaneously disparaged those selling drugs and noted that poor values transmission played a role equal to structural limitations.

Subcultural explanations played a greater role in residents' explanations for Hollygrove's homicides. Anderson (1999) concluded that residents of inner city neighborhoods were forced daily to choose between prosocial values and practical survival codes and that elderly residents anchored such communities by their adherence to prosocial values. The conflict between prosocial and subcultural values appeared throughout the study. While all participants privately espoused the primacy of prosocial values, it was the disaffected younger males who shifted between orientations most often. The younger males were also more likely to be involved in lethal altercations either as victims or as aggressors. Seniors and homeowners were most likely to eschew subcultural values in favor of prosocial ones. There was widespread perception that

this clash between the two values orientation was connected to lethal violence. Residents also thought that poor values transmission and outsiders who didn't espouse prosocial values to be sources of community violence.

Participants most strongly reflected Social Disorganization theory's construct of collective efficacy in their explanations for homicide. Sampson (2012) defined collective efficacy as "social cohesion combined with shared expectations for social control" (p. 27). Each of the three constructs used by participants to describe conditions leading to, or away from, neighborhood homicide were connected to collective efficacy. In the end, the neighborhood's orientation relative to these three constructs best explained the lived experience of homicide in Hollygrove.

A final research question asked whether concentrated disadvantage and homicide would be linked by those in the study. Residents did make this connection in multiple ways. Countercultural values were connected to socioeconomically disadvantaged youth, parents, and outsiders coming to the neighborhood from public housing. The Keeping It Real subculture was understood to be a pathway to personal advancement in an environment of economic and social marginality. The underground economy was viewed as an alternative pathway to economic viability. Neighborhood boundaries were thought to be violated by impoverished outsiders relocating to the neighborhood from public housing. Ultimately, residents viewed homicide as a condition of their structural marginalization which they understood to be a condition of concentrated disadvantage.

One key finding not widely reflected in the literature was boundary porosity. Residents defined their community in terms of outsiders and insiders, a strategy used to defend themselves against those who would harm the neighborhood. Rigid boundaries, however, limited the ability

of outside agents and organizations to help build collective efficacy. Conversely, porous boundaries allowed resources to flow into the neighborhood which led to lower homicide conditions. This appears to be an overlooked feature of neighborhood homicide that might prove an avenue for future research.

Early social disorganization theorists were more comprehensive in their thinking about the connection between urban social conditions and crime. Their view of neighborhoods as bounded, ecological social systems led to a holistic view of a community akin to a biological system. This allowed them to integrate multiple sociological vantage points from which to explore the connection between disadvantage and neighborhood crime. Wirth (1931) made a connection between deviant subcultural values orientation, social class, and crime. Sellin (1938) noted that conflict between the norms of subculture and dominant society was central to understanding crime. Miller (1958) understood subcultures to be exercising a different, rather than oppositional, set of values that were simultaneously adaptive in one environment and delinquent in another. Lewis (1966) saw subcultures to be responding to anomie in a milieu of social disorganization and marginalization, and connected this to neighborhood crime. Still others described broad ethnographic portraits of marginalized subcultures in an effort to explain social disorganization in specific contexts (Shaw, 1930; Cressey, 1932; Sutherland, 1937; Whyte, 1943). The findings of this study suggest that studying a narrow population by using a wider theoretical lens, as did the early social disorganization theorists, may prove helpful in advancing understandings of neighborhood level homicide. Ethnographic studies which explore homicide from the perspective of a small, bounded neighborhood may provide both rich description and depth of information that may help to inform and expand existing theories.

Policy and Practice Implications

Sampson (2012) recommended that effective violence interventions, instead of being targeted toward individual offenders, should instead address efforts to restore at-risk communities by improving both the physical and social infrastructure. His recommendations included community policing, prisoner re-entry programs, repairs or renewal of physical structures, community economic development, and programs for early childhood development. These findings are similar to some of the homicide solutions proposed by Hollygrove residents.

One set of strategies Hollygrove residents envisioned involved repairing physical infrastructure. These included eradicating blight, repairing streets, collecting trash regularly, refurbishing neighborhood parks, and building backyard storm water retention gardens to prevent flooding. While somewhat unconventional as crime prevention strategies, the neighborhood understood them to be important tools of community revitalization which they connected to reduced homicide. A second set of solutions they proposed addressed social infrastructure improvements. These included community meetings, economic improvements, community policing, increased homeownership, and a variety of formal and informal educational strategies. The consonance between the solutions proposed by both Sampson and Hollygrove residents indicates that effective homicide reduction strategies focused upon building neighborhood capital may prove to be an important avenue for further study. Building a healthy environment requires attention to both the physical infrastructure signaling neglect and thus attracting crime, as well as the social infrastructure which, when empowered, can internally combat violence through collective action.

Anderson (1999) concluded that safe neighborhoods required political leadership capable of articulating the problems and working diligently to build coalitions with neighborhood

residents. Likewise, Saville (2009) theorized that safe neighborhoods were ones where agents of formal control worked cooperatively with neighborhood residents by building their capacity to enact resident-driven prevention strategies. Like Sampson, these authors recognized the importance of building resident social capital as part of any comprehensive neighborhood violence reduction strategy. This study found that Hollygrove's enhanced social capital was a component of collective efficacy leading to lower homicide conditions, which confirmed the findings of their research.

Neighborhood violence occurs in settings of institutional and social neglect. Combatting violence, therefore, requires ameliorating the conditions under which it thrives. The legal cynicism experienced by Hollygrove residents was connected to their lived experience of neglect and impacted the neighborhood's high homicide rate. Residents developed a siege mentality toward outside agents and the police described themselves as an occupying force. A vicious cycle of mistrust and antagonism existed between both sides. This extended to politicians and service agencies with potential resources to build both physical and social infrastructure. This condition changed after Katrina as residents were afforded the opportunity to re-envision their community in collaboration with politicians, police and outside agencies.

One avenue that proved especially effective during this period was Second Generation CPTED training. Residents were taught to observe physical cues associated with neighborhood violence such as overgrown lots, blighted housing and poor street lighting. At the same time, they were taught how to work collaboratively with politicians and the police to advance their own agenda of violence reduction. Involving quality of life officers and leadership from the NOPD in the training improved relationships between residents and the department and helped to reduce legal cynicism. The resulting improvement of social capital led to greater collective

efficacy and a reduction in the number of homicides. This program may prove equally effective in other neighborhoods where structural marginalization coincides with high rates of homicide.

Another development that promoted neighborhood empowerment was the Livable Communities Academy which educated residents in effective engagement strategies. The residents' ability to collaborate with well-resourced agents and organizations such as their city councilmember and the Recovery School District led to the construction of a new senior center and school. In addition, their newfound social capital led to relationships with Tulane University and Project NOLA who provided assistance developing backyard storm water retention ponds and neighborhood crime cameras. The Livable Communities Model developed in Hollygrove was credited with a significant reduction in neighborhood homicide and has been replicated by AARP in other neighborhoods. Equipping residents to engage resource-rich individuals and organizations is a strategy that could be easily adapted as a homicide reduction tool because the model already exists and is replicable in other high homicide communities.

St. Jean (2007) concluded his study of neighborhood crime by noting that "policy and programmatic attempts to address the problem must emphasize early intervention from multiple angles, including social, economic, and moral development and uplifting neighborhood space together with neighborhood people" (p. 225). Study participants understood the confluence of social and economic marginality in Hollygrove to impact moral development and thus lead to conditions conducive to high homicide. Residents envisioned solutions for prosocial values transmission including classroom instruction, community-based after-school programs, parenting classes, mentoring, church attendance, and a community public relations campaign. While the connection between prosocial values and collective efficacy is clear in the study's findings, this cannot be divorced from the structural conditions creating marginalization and cynicism. This

connection has implication for policy and practices oriented toward homicide reduction; educating young, inner city residents about values may be insufficient unless accompanied by social and infrastructural improvements. Wilson (2012) wrote, "it follows, therefore, that changes in the economic and social conditions of the underclass will lead to changes in the cultural norms and behavior patterns" (p. 159). Prosocial values, while considered important to a safe neighborhood, cannot predominate in an environment of structural marginalization breeding cynicism and mistrust.

Venkatesh (2006) showed the complex interplay of the underground economy and structural marginalization. While financial survival of those on the economic fringes of society may depend upon the illicit economy, he noted the practice leads to further exclusion from the social mainstream. Bourgois (2003) noted that the street culture, which he found to be intertwined with the illicit economy, "emerges out of a personal search for dignity and a rejection of racism and subjugation [but] it ultimately becomes an active agent in personal degradation and community ruin" (p. 9). Advanced capitalism has created places of limitation, like Hollygrove, where financial viability necessitates drastic choices, ones that violate privately-held prosocial values. Residents understood that the choice to participate in the illicit economy and/or the Keeping It Real subculture was connected to economic limitations faced by many. Their solutions included attracting more economic drivers such as the newly constructed Costco, livable wage jobs with benefits, and strengthening community entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship is a salient feature of the underground economy of Hollygrove. To Bourgois (2003) drug dealers were "aggressively pursuing careers as private entrepreneurs" (p. 326). They possessed a wealth of inventiveness exercised in a market that is destructive personally and to the community. Bourgois calls for dismantling of hostile bureaucracies that

punish the poor for working legally, coupled with "boosting the credibility of the legal economy as an alternative to crime" (p. 322).

To brave the maze of complex bureaucratic regulations for small businesses requires a kind of social capital that many in Hollygrove lack. Building on the entrepreneurial talents of those engaged in the informal marketplace would require a collaborative process between city agencies regulating small businesses and trainers who could teach entrepreneurial, small business development skills to budding entrepreneurs. One such collaboration between the neighborhood, Tulane University's City Center, the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board, and the city councilperson led to the development of a linear park named the Hollygrove Greenline and showed that this type of collaboration is possible. Developing small, entrepreneurial businesses in Hollygrove would require similar collaboration between the city's Department of Economic Development and educators from one of New Orleans' business schools, and would take place inside the neighborhood, allowing for greater participation. Such a model has potential not only to redirect entrepreneurism from the illicit economy but also to provide economic engines and a source of jobs for neighborhood residents.

In 2012 the City of New Orleans began NOLA for Life, a comprehensive program to reduce neighborhood level homicide. A number of the solutions proposed by researchers and residents in this study are present in some form in the plan. These include: promoting jobs and opportunity, improving relationships between the NOPD and neighborhoods, character building programs in schools, and neighborhood blight reduction. Many of the strategies proposed by both researchers and residents are missing from the plan.

One glaring omission from the NOLA for Life plan is a community listening tour. As the residents of Hollygrove demonstrated, there is a wealth of knowledge in marginalized

communities regarding homicide, its reduction, and its prevention. McKnight and Kretzmann (2002) proposed that any comprehensive neighborhood strategy begins with uncovering assets hidden in communities and then building upon them to create neighborhood change. Hollygrove was full of assets waiting to be discovered. When they were brought together and provided with resources they found their voice and discovered collective efficacy that led to neighborhood change. Lao Tzu submitted that the first step of change started by learning from the people themselves. This points to an important component consideration for homicide reduction, listening long enough to uncover hidden assets in disadvantaged communities.

Through their violence reduction efforts Hollygrove residents became connected to outside agents that included politicians, police, and organizations with resources. In the collaborative ventures that followed residents discovered that collective action had a powerful impact upon homicide reduction. Cynicism and mistrust diminished and neighborhood boundaries became more porous. Their social capital improved and confidence in prosocial values was bolstered. This suggests that elected officials and agents of formal control that work collaboratively with a community may enhance a community's collective efficacy and create conditions of lower homicide.

Lao Tzu's poem ends with an excellent description of collective efficacy: the people will say, "we did it ourselves." Hollygrove's residents discovered that reducing neighborhood homicide cannot be the sole domain of outside agencies. Waiting for others to fix the problem is a condition of advanced marginality and its accompanying hopelessness and helplessness. Instead they were able to move their neighborhood from a position of opposition, mistrust and marginality toward high collective efficacy, discovering in the process that these were the conditions required to reduce homicide.

Chapter 13

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**University Committee for the Protection
of Human Subjects in Research
University of New Orleans**

Campus Correspondence

Principal Investigator: Pam Jenkins

Co-Investigator: Kevin J. Brown

Date: 11/5/2014

Protocol Title: Understanding Homicide at the Neighborhood Level

IRB#: 02-Nov-14

The IRB has deemed that the research and procedures are compliant with the University of Ne w Orleans and federal guidelines. The above referenced human subjects protocol has been reviewed and approved using expedited procedures (under 45 CFR 46.116(a) category (7).

Approval is only valid for one year from the approval date. Any changes to the procedures or protocols must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation. Use the IRB number listed on this letter in all future correspondence regarding this proposal.

If an adverse, unforeseen event occurs (e.g., physical, social, or emotional harm), you are required to inform the IRB as soon as possible after the event.

Best wishes on your project!

Sincerely,

Robert D. Laird, Ph.D., Chair
UNO Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research

Appendix II: Questions and Avenues of Inquiry for Interviews and Focus Groups

Neighborhood Level Homicide and Social Disorganization Theory
Suggested Questions and Avenues of Inquiry

Personal history in Hollygrove
- Talk about how you came to live in Hollygrove
- Tell me about your family's history in Hollygrove
- What was the neighborhood like when you were younger
- Talk about how the neighborhood has changed

Strengths of the neighborhood
- Talk about the things that make Hollygrove unique
- Tell me about the places in Hollygrove that are special
- Talk about the people here and how they sets the neighborhood apart
- What institutions have shaped this community

Life on the street in Hollygrove
- Talk about what life is like on your block
- Tell me some of the things you see that I might never see
- Who are the unique, special people in the community
- Talk to me about people who aren't so great for the community

Fear and safety in Hollygrove
- Tell me some of the things that Hollygrove residents fear
- The neighborhood has a reputation for being dangerous, talk to me about that
- More specifically, talk about the murders/shootings in our neighborhood
- From your perspective, what prompts people to kill
- Are there things that could be done to reduce violence

Hot spot in neighborhoods
- Certain parts of our community are more dangerous than others; from your perspective. which parts of the community are safe and which parts are more dangerous
- Talk to me about what you think makes places safe and others dangerous
- Certain corners have more shootings than others, talk to me about you think are the reasons
- Some places have gotten less dangerous; what do you think are the reasons

Personal history with violence in Hollygrove
- Tell me about your personal experiences with violence in the community
- Talk to me about how violence shapes the way you act in the community
- Has it changed the way you feel about the community this is a yes or no question
- Talk about how the level of violence affects how you think about the community
- Some people move away, others stay; talk to me about why you've stayed here

Compare Hollygrove to other safer neighborhoods
- Some New Orleans neighborhoods are considered safe neighborhoods, talk to me about what makes one neighborhood safe and another dangerous
- Tell me your thoughts about why Hollygrove is thought to be less safe than other communities

What would make Hollygrove safer
- Many people have ideas about how to make their neighborhood safer, tell me your ideas about how we could make life safer here
- You may have heard other people's great ideas about improving the neighborhood, talk to me about ideas others have had that would make Hollygrove safer
- Perhaps you have heard of things the city is doing to make the city safer and thought that might work in Hollygrove, tell me about those things

Your own future and Hollygrove
- Talk about your future in Hollygrove
- Tell me some things you would like to see happen here

Questions for NGO officials and city officials who have some knowledge and experience in Hollygrove
- Please talk about how you see the Hollygrove community
- To you, what are the elements that make Hollygrove different from other, similar communities
- From your perspective, what elements does Hollygrove share with other similar neighborhoods
- From your experience, please talk to me about the people who live in Hollygrove
- Tell me why Hollygrove is seen as a violent community (is this a valid/deserved reputation)
- What is your theory about why some communities experience more homicides than others
- Please talk about why homicide happens in Hollygrove
- From your perspective, please talk about how a community like Hollygrove might lessen the number of homicides in the community
- From your position, please talk to me about what must change for the quality of life of Hollygrove residents to improve
- As *(name the position)*, talk about the things you know about that have improved in the community and why these improvements are taking place
- Are you aware of other things that could be happening to positively impact life for members of the neighborhood

Remember to thank them for their time

Appendix III: Vita

Kevin J. Brown received his Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with high honors in 1982 from Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois. In 1986 he graduated from the University of Illinois at Chicago with his Master of Social Work. Brown continued graduate studies with the Doctor of Philosophy in Urban Studies program at the University of New Orleans in 2012. He successfully completed all program requirements, and led by his dissertation committee (Dr. Pam Jenkins, Dr. Bethany Stich, Dr. David Gladstone, and Dr. Peter Scharf) will graduate from the UNO program in May, 2016.